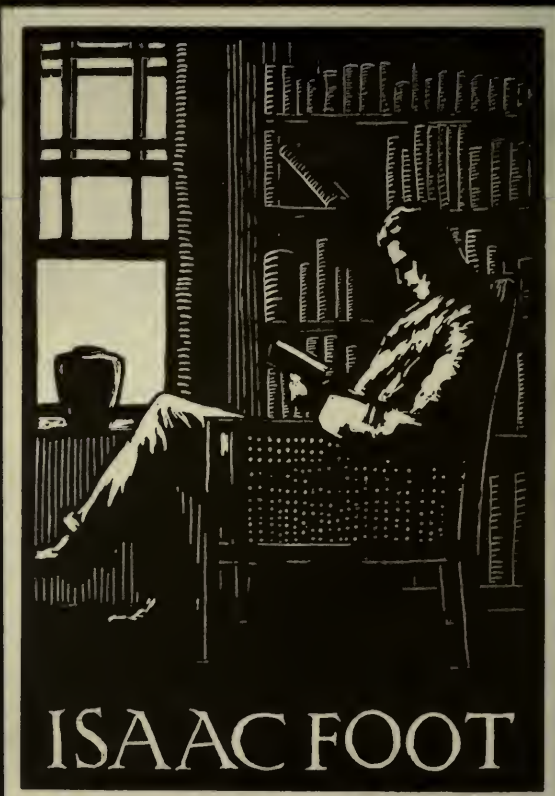
# VIGNETTES OF THE REGENCY

WILLIAM TOYNBEE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# VIGNETTES OF THE REGENCY

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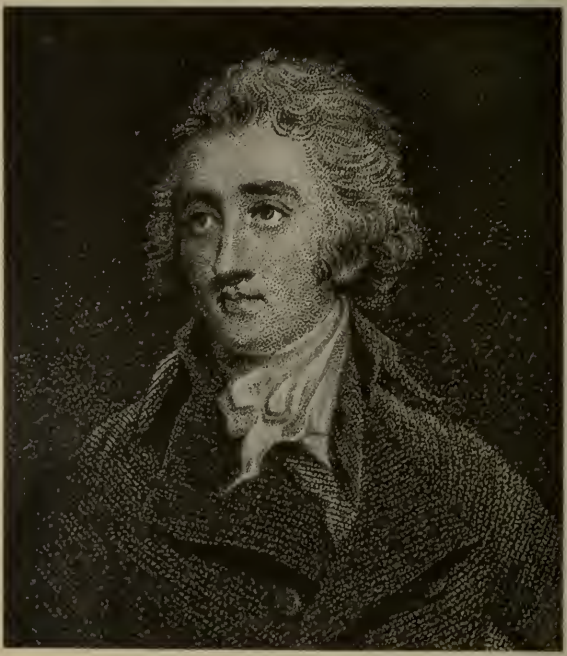

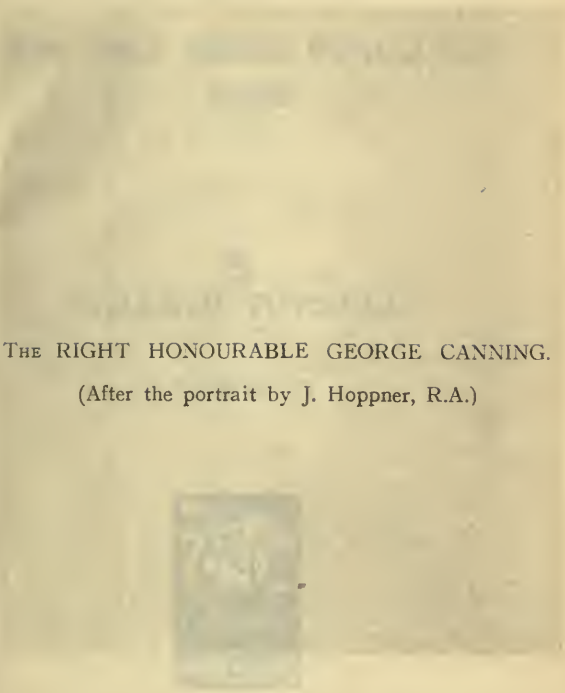

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE CANNING.

(After the portrait by J. Hoppner, R.A.)

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# VIGNETTES OF THE REGENCY

## And Other Studies Political and Social

By
WILLIAM TOYNBEE
"

*ILLUSTRATED*

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"A Famous Whig Hostess," and "A Political Ishmael," appeared originally in *The World*; "Mr. Pitt in Private Life," in *The Westminster Review*; and "A Nineteenth Century Bayard," under another title, in *The New Century Review*.

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# The Prince Regent and the Royal Family

WHEN in February, 1811, George Prince of Wales relinquished the title under which he had made himself, at any rate among votaries of pleasure and fashion, the most conspicuous Heir Apparent in Europe, he was yet in the prime of life, and but for a portliness which, next to his wife, was probably the acutest trial of his existence, would still have ranked among the most presentable of his sex. Moreover, in charm of manner and grace of bearing he continued to hold the field against all rivals, royal or otherwise, while his sparkling conversation and varied accomplishments rendered Carlton House the most vivacious royal abode that the country had known since the days

of Charles II. Notwithstanding, then, the wide-spread feeling of sorrow aroused by the calamity which had virtually deprived George III of the throne, in London, at all events, it was tempered by the consideration that the old humdrum régime with which the Court had contented itself for the last half-century would be replaced by an era of splendour and brilliancy such as the great English metropolis never fails to appreciate.

It is the custom nowadays, thanks in large measure to the wholesale diatribes of Mr. Greville and Mr. Thackeray, to regard the Regent as a mere monster of sensuality, little better than Tiberius ; but a dispassionate survey of all the facts impels the conclusion that the illustrious personage has received far too drastic treatment at the hands of posterity. Though his morality was undoubtedly lax, it had little of the grossness which characterized certain of his predecessors, while his temptations were assuredly exceptional, even for a Prince of Wales. In

fact, had he entered upon life without any of the accessories of an exalted station, but merely, let us suppose, in the position of an English gentleman of wealth and fashion, such were his personal attractions that in feminine eyes, at all events, he would probably have found very little less favour than he did as Heir to the Throne.

Here is a description of him in 1805 by Dr. Burney who it must be borne in mind was an enthusiastic admirer of the old King.

Your brother Charles and I have had the honour last Tuesday of dining with the Prince of Wales at Lord Melbourne's at the particular request of His Royal Highness. He is so good humoured and gracious to those against whom he has no party prejudice that it is impossible not to be flattered by his politeness and condescension. I was astonished to find him, amidst such constant dissipations, possessed of so much learning, wit, knowledge of books in general, discrimination of character, as well as original humour. He quoted Homer in Greek to my son as readily as if the beauties of Dryden and Pope had been under consideration. And as to music, he is an excellent critic, has an enlarged

taste, admiring whatever is good in its kind, of whatever age or country the composer or performer may be. The conversation was general, and lively, in which several of the company, consisting of eighteen or twenty, took a share, till towards the heel of the evening, or rather the toe of the morning (for we did not rise from table till one o'clock), when Lady Melbourne being returned from the Opera with her daughters, coffee was ordered; during which His Royal Highness took me aside and talked exclusively about music near half an hour and as long with your brother concerning Greek Literature. He is a most excellent mimic of well known characters; had it been in the dark every one would have sworn that Dr. Parr and Kemble were in the room. Besides being possessed of a great fund of original humour and *good humour*, he may with truth be said to have as much wit as Charles II, with much more learning, for the merry monarch could spell no better than the *bourgeois gentilhomme*.

To a Prince of epicurean tendencies such fascinating gifts were a dangerous endowment; but there was another, and by no means insignificant, ground of extenuation, namely the attitude which George the Third thought fit to adopt towards him from earliest boyhood. Even that exemplary monarch's most

partial admirers found it difficult to explain the harshness and austerity with which from the outset he invariably treated his eldest son. His demeanour to him was marked by all the insensate antipathy displayed by George I and George II to their destined successors, and with much less excuse, inasmuch as the young Prince of Wales, though not exempt from failings, early evinced a variety of qualities that captivated every one but his father. It is conceivable that apart from the regulation aversion in which monarchs for the most part hold their heirs the King was jealous of talents and fascinations that he himself conspicuously lacked, and which he foresaw would earn for the Prince a popularity only too likely to impair his own prestige. But whatever the cause, in his father's eyes the unfortunate youth *avait toujours tort*, and if he occasionally exhibited himself in an unfilial light, it cannot be said that it was from want of provocation. One of the King's favourite

sneers at his son was a lack of courage. Old George Rose relates how on some occasion when His Majesty was his guest at Cuffnells, in the course of a long ride the King's favourite daughter, poor Princess Amelia, was thrown from her horse, and, in Mr. Rose's opinion, so severely shaken as to justify him in suggesting to the King that she should discontinue the excursion and return home. But His Majesty peremptorily declined to permit anything of the kind, ordering the Princess to re-mount and proceed to their destination, gratuitously adding to the embarrassed Mr. Rose : " Thank God ! there is but one of my children who is wanting in courage, and I will not name him because he is to succeed me ! "

Now the Prince of Wales may have had a certain strain of effeminacy in his temperament, which contrasted not too advantageously with his father's stubborn " Britishness," but if he had been the poltroon the King always made a point of depicting him, it

is hardly likely that he would have written the importunate, almost impassioned supplication for leave to serve with his regiment in the field during the Napoleonic wars, a petition which the King rejected with calculated contempt. Under these circumstances it is scarcely surprising that when the young Prince was reluctantly released from leading-strings and granted a not too liberal establishment of his own, he signalized his emancipation by a recklessness of conduct which naturally served to accentuate the King's rancour against him. Nevertheless, the nation, though not free from occasional misgivings, had hitherto regarded him indulgently enough, treating him very much as a species of Royal "Charles Surface," whose failings they deplored, while not insensible to his many attractive qualities. Nor had even his lamentable marriage and the resulting scandal that for so many years forced itself on the public notice alienated from him the kindly tolerance of

his future subjects. It was pretty generally understood that the union had been arranged as a mere financial bargain, the consideration being the discharge of the Prince's debts, which were beginning to assume a magnitude that seemed likely to doom him to the ignominious existence of a Royal outlaw.

Any one who will take the trouble (it will be well repaid) of dipping into the Diaries of the first Lord Malmesbury (the special envoy charged with escorting the bride elect from Brunswick), will readily judge the manner of wife which the King and his ministers had provided for the unhappy prodigal. In spite of some sterling qualities and a decidedly lively wit, it is abundantly evident that Princess Caroline was an irreclaimable hoyden, whose escapades and "imprudences" (to use no stronger term) were the despair of her parents and the talk of the Palace. She was, moreover, given to certain unconventionalities in the matter of toilet and the alternations of underwear,

which so seriously perturbed the famous Ambassador that he felt impelled to devote the diplomacy which had hitherto been exerted in preserving the balance of power to a dexterous advocacy of the claims of soap, and a less intermittent replacement of petticoats and stockings, "secret services" which prompted the wags of the day to represent His Excellency as peculiarly deserving of *the Garter!* But though the Princess promised and, apparently, for a time actually made amendment, she speedily relapsed into her normal slovenliness, and, accordingly, it is without much surprise that we read of the ghastly ceremonial at St. James's on that fatal April evening in 1795, the unwelcome bride endeavouring to disguise her discomfiture by an uneasy assumption of jauntiness, and the disgusted bridegroom, primed with brandy, stumbling through the responses at the prompting of his indignant sire! Poor garish Princess! she saw very little more of St. James's. After a few

miserable months under her husband's roof, she began that chequered career of mock Courts and merciless proscription which was destined to wind up a quarter of a century later with the supreme indignity of Westminster Hall.

Her appearance towards the end of her life was of the description which, according to Mr. Shelley, "makes men tremble who never weep"; so, at least, it is impossible not to feel when contemplating the amazing presentment of Her Majesty in St. Martin's Place! But time was, if we are to credit a certain susceptible Cheshire Baronet who developed into the first Lord Stanley of Alderley, when a slight figure in a white frock, with a blue riband in her fair hair, she possessed an irresistible charm, which inspired the young fellow with an admiration that the disastrous events of later years never wholly dispelled. From all lovers of *bon mots* Her Majesty will always command a certain amount of veneration on account of a saying which, if it ever

reached her truant husband's ears, must have imported into his aversion a touch of envy! It was in reference to the announcement that divorce proceedings against her had been decided upon. "Well," remarked the Queen, "I can only say that I was never guilty of misconduct but once, and that was with Mrs. Fitzherbert's husband!" An appropriate pendant to her Consort's historic exclamation when one of his ministers apprised him of the death of Napoleon: "Sire, I have the gratification to announce that your Majesty's greatest enemy is dead."

"Is she, by God?"

The town had not been at fault in its expectation that the Regent would inaugurate a new era at Court. A few months after his installation, he gave a fête at Carlton House which was in vivid contrast to the shabby insipid functions that had so long characterized the dingy saloons of St. James's Palace. So gorgeous was the entertainment that it even stimulated something akin to

enthusiasm in that essentially impassive official, Mr. Speaker Abbot, who actually condescended to devote to it nearly three long pages in the driest of political diaries! The supper-room appears to have been the sight of the evening, and one can imagine the illustrious host for months before, in close conclave with his troop of artistic myrmidons, elaborately devising this masterpiece of decorative splendour. "The Prince's table," records the Speaker, "could not have been less than 200 feet long. My children would have been amused with the river of water and the little gudgeons swimming about in the whole length of the table, and all the grown children were equally delighted." After alluding to a sneer of Mr. Tierney (one of the Whigs lately thrown over by their august patron) at "the Sadlers Wells business of the rivulet and the swimming fishes," the Speaker proceeds: "Nevertheless, it was oriental and fanciful, towards the Prince's end particularly; for in that

part the table widened, and the water also, and fell by a succession of cascades into a circular lake surrounded with architectural decorations and small vases, burning perfumes, which stood under the arches of the colonnade round the lake." The "colonnade" suggests that Mr. Nash of Regent Street celebrity was the animating spirit of this wonderful creation, while for the "cascades and lake" some Capability Brown or other kindred genius was probably responsible. Next comes a description which in a measure accounts for the silversmith's little bill of something near £200,000 which was presented to the nation not long afterwards. "Behind the Prince's end of the table there was a magnificent service of gilt plate three stories high; while a band in the garden not seen by the company played the whole time." Then follows a passage which indicates that the evening must have been prolific in heart-burnings, even among the invited guests. "After the supper was well ended, and before

the company rose to go upstairs again, there was a grand crowd from the supper-room, beyond the brass railing, of fine ladies and gentlemen who came to lean against and look over the railing at our superior lot, and to endeavour at descrying the gudgeons in our river." (The Speaker's style is a trifle cumbersome!) "'There I see them!' 'Look! look!' 'Don't you,' etc., by all the Misses and company, old and young, not to mention Lady Mansfield, Lady Buckingham's niece, old Mr. Hastings, and many other souls old and young whose eager and ridiculous curiosity were very entertaining." "Old Mr. Hastings" was of course none other than the famous ex-Governor-General who evidently was worshipping the rising sun in the hopes of obtaining that peerage which in spite of so many fair promises was never conferred! This is almost the last public mention of a man who less than twenty years before had been himself the cynosure of Princes; and here we see him rubbing

elbows with the ruck of Fashion in order to catch a glimpse of a royal supper-table.

The allusion to Tierney and the disappointed Whigs calls for a word or two concerning the relations of the Prince with his former political friends, who never forgave their exclusion from power on his assumption of the regal office. It must, however, be borne in mind that he found himself in an extremely difficult and delicate position. There is no doubt that at first he was genuinely anxious to bring in his old associates ("By God! They shall not remain one hour!" had been his declaration regarding the Tory Ministers), but the Whig leaders very soon contrived to alienate him by taking up the same attitude of arrogant dictation that had so deeply incensed George III. Sheridan, moreover, who by this time had become, so to speak, the pariah of his Party, and whom the haughty Whig aristocrats were resolved never to admit again to office, did not aid matters as the Prince's

informal negotiator. Still, the position was not altogether hopeless when another factor intervened, which decisively sealed the fate of the Whig aspirants. Towards the end of January the King, who had been rapidly growing better, inquired of Lord Eldon whether it was the Regent's intention to change the Government, and on the Chancellor replying that he understood such to be the case, the King declared that he would bring the existing Government back. This was followed up by a warning from the Queen of the prejudicial effect that a change of Ministers might have on the King's health; the result being that on the evening of the same day an intimation was conveyed to the Whig leaders that it was not the Prince's intention "to make any change at present."

This "not at present" proved singularly elastic, for the Party that was not to have been retained "one hour" remained continuously in office for the whole of the nineteen years during which their former denouncer

ruled as Regent and King! Nor, whatever the Tory shortcomings, had the nation any reason to regret their long tenure of power, for, if the debates of the day are any criterion, it is tolerably certain that had the Whigs been directing public affairs during the years covered by the Peninsular War and Waterloo, England would have sunk to the status of a third-rate Power, and Europe have remained under the heel of Napoleon for probably another decade.

Sheridan, who had more than once been entrusted with "backstairs" business for his august patron, was destined before long to entail for him considerable unpopularity, which Tom Moore, in sentimental disregard of inconvenient facts, largely accentuated by his celebrated "Monody." Readers of Lord Byron's letters and other notable correspondence of that time will have no difficulty in arriving at a fairly accurate estimate of Sheridan during the last few years of his life. Never distinguished by

a very acute sense of honour, he had fallen into a state of utter indifference to every consideration but that of keeping his head above the muddy water in which he was now habitually floundering Fertile in shifts and expedients which would have lodged less favoured practitioners in sterner duress than the sponging-house, he devoted the dregs of his brilliant intellect to the avocation of cajoling creditors and fleecing any friends who could still be found to confide in him. Of these the Regent was certainly not the least indulgent. Not only had he conferred on him a lucrative sinecure worth close upon £2,000 a year, but in order to provide him, more as a sanctuary from bailiffs than for political purposes, with a seat in Parliament, he had furnished a considerable sum which Sheridan had represented would secure his election at Stafford. Instead, however, of even going through the form of approaching that constituency, Sheridan coolly applied the money to other purposes,

a transaction which, stripped of the Sheridanian glamour, amounted to nothing else than obtaining money on false pretences. It is scarcely surprising that on discovering the imposition the Prince determined to have nothing more to do with his incorrigible protégé, who, indeed so far realized the flagrancy of his conduct as to dispense with his usual impudent attempts at exculpation, for he never had the courage to look his patron in the face again. Nevertheless, when the last stage of degradation was reached, and he lay dying under conditions to which even the brush of Hogarth would have found it difficult to do justice, the Prince, on hearing the circumstances, immediately sent some hundreds of pounds to meet his personal necessities, an act of generosity which Mrs. Sheridan, apparently at the instigation of certain Whig friends, ostentatiously declined to avail herself of. Studiously ignoring all the facts, the Regent's political enemies, the majority of whom had long since turned

their backs on Sheridan, made his distressing death the occasion of a virulent attack on the Prince, whom they held up to public obloquy as a monster of brutal indifference, while the associate they had themselves so sternly proscribed was depicted as little less than a paragon of human excellence!

The Regent, in truth, was as a rule a good friend, and in several instances displayed a patience and forbearance to his protégés which were but ill repaid. To Brummell, for example, who vulgarly presuming on the favour he had won in high places, treated the Prince with little more ceremony than he would Tom Sheridan or Jack Morris, His Royal Highness showed a toleration which none of the Beau's less exalted friends were disposed to extend to him; while even to Denman, who in the course of Queen Caroline's trial had not scrupled under the veil of a classical allusion, to associate him with unspeakable infamy, he evinced a placability of which, under the circumstances,

few sovereigns would have been capable. Moreover, he would seldom resent retaliation, however trenchant, where he himself had been the provoker. For instance he on one occasion accepted with a good grace probably the most poignant retort ever administered by a commoner to a Prince of the Blood. At some convivial gathering where Sidney Smith, whom he particularly disliked, was of the party, a discussion arose as to who was the worst man in history, and the Prince, on being appealed to, observed that in his opinion the worst man in history was the Abbé Dubois, adding with a significant glance at the Whig divine, "and he, Mr. Sidney, was a priest." "Sir," was the imperturbable rejoinder, "I beg respectfully to differ from your Royal Highness; in my humble judgment the worst man in history was the Regent D'Orléans, and he, sir, was a Prince!"

When once, too, he was minded to serve a friend there was no trouble that he would not

undertake to secure his object. Witness his famous siege of Lord Eldon when the Chancellor was obdurate to his application for a Mastership in Chancery for his protégé, Jekyll. Finding all his written appeals in vain, he drove to the Chancellor's house, and declared his intention of remaining there till his request was granted, even if it involved his staying all night. This is only one of many instances which tend to prove that he was far from deserving the reputation for crass selfishness with which it is the custom to invest him. Again, with his brothers and sisters he was always popular, the Princesses, especially, regarding him not only with affection but with a confidence which was particularly exemplified by the poor little Princess Amelia, who appointed him her executor, in spite of his unfortunate alienation from his father to whom she was so devoted.

It is, of course, idle to deny that the Prince occasionally behaved capriciously, and in certain instances with a lack of that high

breeding and courtesy for which he had acquired a European reputation, but in the main, he must be credited with a kindliness of disposition united to a charm of manner which even so exacting a judge as Sir Walter Scott found irresistible. As regards his character, no one is likely to accuse the Duke of Wellington of being anything but a rigidly impartial critic; yet, the Duke, in delivering his estimate of George IV after his death, declared him to be the most singular compound of good and bad qualities that he had ever encountered, adding, "on the whole, however, the good preponderating." This testimony is surely far more trustworthy than that of Charles Greville, who starting with a liberal allowance of indigenous venom concocted his indictment of the King from the gossip of pantries and the tattle of stable-yards. As for Thackeray, he held, as it were, a brief for the prosecution, and beyond allowing the Prince to have once bespoken a special prayer, and to have good-naturedly accosted

a housemaid, declines to credit him with a single favourable point, however insignificant. "The Four Georges" as an essay in satire is excellent reading, but as a contribution to history it is of very questionable value. Exaggeration and mis-statements (one unpardonable blunder is the confusing of the two Königsmarks) are far too plentiful, while there is perceptible throughout an undertone of democratic prejudice which, in spite of his real partiality for rank, Thackeray would sometimes divert himself by affecting on paper.

As a ruler, whether Regent or King, George was always observant of constitutional obligations, though, like every monarch, on certain questions he was individually opposed to the policy of his ministers ; and it is no small tribute to his qualities as a Sovereign that so burning a question as Catholic Emancipation, to which he was vehemently antagonistic, should have been peaceably settled during his occupation of the throne. He

must also be credited not only with overcoming his personal repugnance to Mr. Canning, but with loyally accepting the larger and more enlightened principles of policy which marked that great minister's return to the Foreign Office in 1822; while his adherence to him when, in the course of 1827, the "old Tory" magnates fell away *en masse*, was no less praiseworthy. In fact during the few golden years of Mr. Canning's ascendancy, George IV enjoyed a prestige among the Sovereigns of Europe never attained by his father, except, perhaps, after the battle of Trafalgar, a position scarcely compatible with the unmitigated worthlessness so generally ascribed to him as a monarch.

Of Art he was a generous and discerning patron, Lawrence and Chantrey being held by him in special honour. To Raeburn, by the way, he applied a remark that deserves to be quoted as an example of his graceful felicity. He was a great admirer of the

painter's work, and on one occasion, when enthusiastically praising it, was asked by one of his privileged companions why he did not create Raeburn a baronet. "I would do so at once," was the reply, "but for the fact that my father only made Sir Joshua Reynolds a knight, and it would be invidious to give to Raeburn what was withheld from Reynolds."

As regards Literature, his appreciation of Walter Scott is well known. Not only did he confer on him a baronetcy, then an unprecedented distinction for a man of letters, but more than once invited him to Windsor where he was treated as one of his most honoured guests. Moreover, in Scott's financial difficulties he at once showed practical sympathy by making an offer of pecuniary help, thus belying the well-worn admonition concerning the friendship of Princes. If as an improver of the metropolis he was not always successful (Buckingham Palace was not one of his most fortunate enterprises), on the whole he rendered it

signal service, reclaiming Hyde Park from its savagery, creating the Regent's Park, and replacing a network of unsightly slums with one of the finest thoroughfares in Europe.

One paramount attribute must not be passed over. Whatever his escapades as Prince of Wales, as Regent and King he was invariably characterized by sovereign dignity, while he resolutely refused to pollute the Fountain of Honour by the indiscriminate distribution of ribands and peerages, which has nowadays unhappily become an almost established usage.

Let us now pass from the Regent to the members of the Royal Family, taking first his daughter the Princess Charlotte.

Probably the best account of the young Princess is that given by the veteran Lord Albemarle who survived to our own day, and not long before his death published some extremely interesting reminiscences, which are much less widely known than they deserve to be. The Princess who was the only child

of the deplorable union which has already been commented on, had more resemblance to her mother than to her father in character and temperament, impulsiveness, sometimes degenerating into a touch of the "mad-cap," being one of her cardinal traits. This inconvenient quality would doubtless have become modified with advancing years; indeed, under the excellent influence of her husband Prince Leopold, she had already shown herself capable of self discipline in a way which happily falsified the ominous anticipations of many who had been familiar with her in early girlhood. But on one memorable accasion, her reckless obedience to impulse was within an ace of plunging the country into a revolution. There are few more dramatic incidents in "Royal Family" history than the flight from Warwick House in 1813. The Heir, or rather Heiress, Presumptive to the Throne stealing at night into a common hackney coach and driving across London to claim the protection of a

mother who had been placed beyond the pale of Royal recognition, was an event unprecedented even in the stormy annals of the House of Hanover. Had the populace, who doted on her, been aware that she was in their midst, and under such circumstances, that evening would have probably witnessed a ferment compared to which the "Burdett" disturbances would have been insignificant. Luckily, however, the adventure was accomplished in comparative secrecy, and the night passed without any greater *contretemps* than a hurried assemblage of ministerial and unofficial notabilities at the Princess of Wales's house in Connaught Place, where Princes of the Blood, Cabinet Ministers, and legal "big-wigs" were kept kicking their heels in an ante-room, while Mr. Brougham of the Junior Bar was closeted in confidential discourse with the august mother and daughter! If we are to believe Mr. Brougham (not always a trustworthy witness concerning his own exploits) the illustrious throng down-

stairs retreated in the small hours, having ignominiously failed to make any impression on the young Princess, who as the dawn began to break still held her ground, defying alike remonstrances and counsel.

At this desperate juncture a happy inspiration seized Mr. Brougham. Throwing open one of the wide drawing-room windows that are still a feature of Connaught Place, he prevailed on the young Princess to leave the heated room for a moment's fresh air in the balcony. Then, pointing to the Park, which lay dim and inanimate in the glimmer of daybreak, after eloquently enlarging on its tranquil aspect, he suddenly changed his tone and solemnly warned the defiant girl that unless she returned immediately to Warwick House, by the noon of that day those peaceful swards would be trampled by a seething mob, and on her head would be the bloodshed that must infallibly ensue! The dramatic apostrophe had the desired effect; the Princess surrendered at discretion, and re-

turned forthwith to her own home. Why has the incident never been immortalized on canvas? Given a painter who could succeed in dignifying the physiognomy of Mr. Brougham, the subject should surely be an inspiring one.

The Princess paid dearly for her escapade, being handed over to the custody of her grandmother, grim old Queen Charlotte, who deported her to one of the Windsor Lodges where she lived for some months under a system of seclusion and *surveillance* that amounted to little short of State imprisonment. The old Queen doubtless acted for the best, according to her narrow lights, but she was a grim guardian for the gay sunny-hearted young girl, by whom any form of tyranny and injustice, whether displayed to herself or to others, was always passionately resented. Happier days, however, were in store for her, and when in 1816 she married the wise and sympathetic Prince Leopold, her destiny seemed fully as bright as that many

years later accorded to her cousin Queen Victoria. What manner of queen she would have made, by dint of her own fine qualities developed and fortified by those of her Consort, it is not difficult to predict, and the genuine grief and despair of the nation when, owing to the astonishing blundering of her accoucheur, she was suddenly snatched from her new-found happiness were an eloquent testimony to the golden opinions she had won from her future subjects.

The death of the Princess Charlotte vested the succession in a very different heir-apparent, namely the Duke of York, the old King's favourite son, notwithstanding the stupendous scandal of a few years before when his name was bawled by every street ballad-singer in connexion with the most shameless Phryne of the age, while even the gutter-snipes in playing "pitch-and-toss" took cognizance of the *cause célèbre* by temporarily substituting for "Heads-or-Tails" the more alliterative phrase of "Duke or Darling!" Never was

the House of Commons so crowded as during the examination of Mrs. Mary Ann Clarke in support of Colonel Wardle's famous resolutions against the Royal Commander-in-Chief, and well were honourable members repaid for their assiduous attendance, for a more wittily impudent witness has seldom enlivened any tribunal. Though manifestly unveracious she contrived by her charm and vivacity to soften the hearts of even the most exemplary senators, with the result that whenever she invoked opportune exhaustion or faintness the House would resound with the anxious tones of unimpeachable Paterfamiliases: "A chair for Mrs. Clarke!" "A glass of water for Mrs. Clarke!" Speaker Abbot, who evidently welcomed this lively innovation on his ordinarily solemn routine, though he was, of course, too dignified to admit it, sedately records the "Duke or Darling" impromptu, which his editor supplements with a felicitous parody of Horace's "Ode to Barine" that had been composed in the fair

witness's honour! The concluding stanzas pithily depict the Siren's seductiveness:

For thee, along each crowded street,
Hot pulses every moment beat,
New shores their empire court;
Nor, threatening oft and sore annoyed,
Scarce Dukes and Claverings can avoid
Their old and loved resort.

Old Dawler wails his thousand pound,
A thousand mothers wish thee drowned
All trembling for their calves;
While timid brides in soft alarms
Sit sighing anxious lest thy charms
Detain their dearer halves!

The allusion to "Dukes and Claverings" is explained by the fact that the Duke of York and a certain other patron of the lady had some time before the inquiry proved fickle, which, in addition to considerable arrears of alimony, had in the Duke's case converted Mrs. Clarke into a hostile witness. As every one knows, the Duke was acquitted of corruption, went through the farce of resigning, and was re-

appointed a year or two afterwards. But Mrs. Clarke was not so easily disposed of; after various tentative measures to obtain pecuniary consolation from His Royal Highness, which proved ineffectual, she boldly embarked on a chronicle of her relations with the Duke, including the publication of all his love letters, which speedily brought the Prince to a more accommodating spirit, for rather than allow his family confidences and amatory correspondence to enthrall the town, he paid to the enterprising editress several thousands down, besides securing her £400 a year for life! But to a lady whose wine-glasses had cost two guineas apiece, and who had been accustomed to dine off porcelain that formerly adorned the dinner-tables of kings, this snug little provision not unnaturally proved far from adequate, and she was constrained to end her days at Boulogne, where she was still to be seen in the "Fifties," with little left except wit and audacity, which she preserved unimpaired to the last.

Though, it must be owned, not a paragon of morality the Duke of York was evidently lovable in private life (even winning the good word of the acetic Mr. Greville!), while, if a failure in the field, as a "Horse Guards" Commander-in-Chief he proved, on the whole, not only efficient but popular. Of course the Dawlers and other disappointed warriors who had paid handsome considerations to Mrs. Clarke for unfulfilled promises of promotion, continued to mutter darkly of corruption, but the utmost that was established against the Duke was a most reprehensible laxity, not a shilling of his mistress's levies ever being traced to his pocket, though his "easy-going" tendencies must have been very pronounced to prevent him from suspecting the kind of traffic that Mrs. Clarke was engaged in.

As Heir Apparent he was very little heard of, being chiefly conspicuous for his addiction to Whist and "deep-oathed" denunciations of the Catholic claims. His memorial column,

adorned with a lightning conductor, has long been mysteriously permitted to disfigure the Carlton House Terrace approach to St. James's Park, and presumably the London tradesmen were less fortunate in obtaining a settlement than was Mrs. Clarke, for tradition goes that they greeted its appearance with the remark: "Ah, there he is, still turning his back on his creditors."

After the Duke of York, the most notable of the Regent's brothers was Ernest Duke of Cumberland, who in spite of superb courage and signal ability was far and away the most unpopular of the Royal Princes. George IV when once asked the reason of the Duke's unpopularity gave the following scathing reply: "Because a father never stood well with his son, nor a husband with his wife, nor a lover with his mistress, but the Duke of Cumberland must needs come between them and make mischief." A terrible indictment, but, it is to be feared, only too well founded. Moreover, he was a

political firebrand who in the Ultra-Tory cause stopped at no measure however violent in order to confound the Catholics and defeat Reform. Indeed for either object he would readily have headed a revolution, which, had he been as popular as he was the reverse, would assuredly have been the outcome of more than one perilous crisis. His countenance, to which the disfigurement of a sabre cut incurred in the Flanders Campaign (under circumstances of the most dashing gallantry) had given an expression of sinister savagery, no doubt accounted in some measure for the persistent public rumour that in the mysterious Sellis affair he was the murderer of the dead valet. This, however, was satisfactorily disproved at the inquest, when the jury was presided over by an individual who had every reason for being prejudiced against the Duke, not only individually but as a member of the Royal Family. This was one of the most remarkable men of his day, namely Francis Place, fashionable tailor and fierce democrat,

who more than once held the Government in the hollow of his hand, yet never abused his power, nor exerted it to his own profit or advantage, a rare example of an absolutely disinterested demagogue in an age when even the author of " Political Justice " was content to end his days as a Whig pensioner. Place, who attended the inquest on Sellis, thoroughly well primed with the law bearing on his duties as a juryman, afterwards declared his strong conviction that it was a case of *felo-de-se*, and that the damaging rumours concerning the Duke of Cumberland were wholly unjustified. This pronouncement, coming from one so emphatically anti-Royal, had the effect of allaying the public suspicions, but the Duke always retained his unpopularity, which later on deepened into obloquy by reason of two flagrant scandals of which he was the hero. One was connected with the beautiful Lady Lyndhurst on whom he so pertinaciously persisted in forcing his attentions that Lord Lyndhurst was compelled to

adopt measures for his wife's protection which resulted in a situation that proved a godsend to Society, and something very much the reverse to the illustrious Lothario. The other was a scandal even more serious, for it involved the wife of the Duke's own Household official, Lord Graves, who was so overwhelmed by the horror and shame of the incident that he committed suicide.

The Duke was scarcely more popular with his family than with the public. For his bride he characteristically selected a Royal *divorcée* whom austere Queen Charlotte rigidly declined to receive at Court, while he contrived to embroil himself more or less with both his reigning brothers; though William IV was content to let him off with the comparatively good-natured sarcasm that "if any one happened to have a corn Ernest was pretty certain to tread upon it." To Queen Victoria, whom he fondly hoped to have supplanted, he made himself persistently offensive, squabbling about the Crown Jewels,

a portion of which he alleged belonged to the Kingdom of Hanover, where on the death of William IV he had become reigning sovereign, and with the pettiest spite thwarting the Queen's wishes in the matter of precedence for Prince Albert.

He signalized the inauguration of his career as a reigning sovereign by at once abolishing the Hanoverian constitution, but this was principally by way of bravado, for he eventually settled down into an excellent ruler, having apparently reserved all his venom and viciousness for his native country! His only son and successor, the blind King, who was, according to Jekyll, a most engaging youth, developed into a wise and patriotic sovereign, though his chivalrous resolve to stand by Austria in 1866 cost him his throne, and reduced Hanover to a Prussian Province. It is a curious fact that the careers of all the Dukes of Cumberland have been more or less clouded. Duke William, George II's son, after earning the unenviable sobriquet of

"The Butcher" in the Jacobite campaign of 1745, was hopelessly outmanœuvred at Closterseven, and compelled to sign a convention which filled the country with indignation, and caused him to sheath his sword for the remainder of his days. The next Duke, George III's brother, was a thoroughly *mauvais sujet* who was cast in enormous damages for the seduction of Lady Grosvenor, made a "shady" marriage which occasioned the Royal Marriage Act, and did his best to corrupt his nephew the young Prince of Wales. Then came the Duke, just described, afterwards King of Hanover, while his son and grandson, the two last bearers of the title, though happily not investing it with ill-repute, have both been signally unfortunate.

Of the other Royal brothers, the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Sussex, and Cambridge, only the first-named was in any way conspicuous. It has been the fashion to regard him as little better than a sea-faring buffoon, but there is no doubt that in spite of his

marked eccentricities of speech and manner, he possessed excellent common sense and plenty of practical ability, as the Whigs discovered to their profound chagrin before they had very long been his ministers. His ebullitions both as Prince and King gave the jaded Town many a good laugh, and the "health-drinking" scene described by Miss Burney after his first home-coming surpasses anything in Goldsmith or Sheridan! But his crowning exploit took place when he was King, while attending with Queen Adelaide the Private View of the Royal Academy, whose President at that time was the obsequious Sir Martin Archer Shee. Unluckily, the first picture pointed out to their Majesties by Sir Martin was a portrait of Commodore, afterwards Admiral, Sir Charles Napier, who was in dire disgrace at Court for having accepted service under Don Pedro. Of this fact, however, the President was apparently unconscious, being merely aware that Napier was just then

prominently before the public, and, as a sailor, presumably an object of interest to the nautical monarch. Accordingly in his courtliest manner he indicated the picture, with the explanatory remark: "That, Sir, is a portrait of the celebrated Commodore Napier." His consternation and discomfiture may be readily imagined when the King in a voice of thunder roared back: "Damn Commodore Napier, and damn you, sir, and if the Queen weren't here I would kick you downstairs!"

The Duke of Kent, considering his nearness to the succession, was very little before the public. Apparently he was a high principled but somewhat wrong-headed man, not much in favour with his father, and in frequent conflict with his elder brother and superior officer, the Duke of York, a fact of which Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke made no little capital in one of her "spicy" publications. He is chiefly memorable for being the father of Queen Victoria, and so stern a martinet

that his military rule at Gibraltar produced something like a mutiny which entailed his recall and relegation to the retired List. Like most of his brothers he died deeply in debt, and between family quarrels and the clamour of creditors seems to have passed as unenjoyable an existence as has ever been vouchsafed to a Prince of the Blood.

The Duke of Sussex was essentially the dilettante and political "dabbler" of the Royal Family. In early years he much affected a kilt, but later on was distinguished by a skullcap in which he cut a venerable figure surrounded by the books that he loved to collect but was less addicted to opening. He posed as a Whig, presided over the Royal Society, married twice morganatically, and ostentatiously rejected a Royal sepulchre for the democratic privacy of Kensal Green. A heavy, good-hearted, not very wise Prince, he seems to have been rather cold-shouldered by his family, being passed over for the Regency of Hanover,

in favour of his younger brother, the Duke of Cambridge.

Of the last named Duke, who was apparently the most unexceptionable of all the Princes in the matter of conduct, some pleasant glimpses are given in Mrs. Trench's charming journal. In his later years he was chiefly remarkable for amiable eccentricity, his habit of soliloquizing at all times and places, including church, being quite as conspicuous as that of John William Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley. At Divine Service he made a particular point of orally accepting the public invitation of the officiating clergyman, to whose "Let us pray," he would genially reply, "By all means," indulging moreover in shrewd running comments on such portions of the Ritual as did not appeal to his common sense. The prayer for rain, for instance, he would preface with the meteorological dictum: "We shan't get it, all the same, while the wind remains in this quarter," while he would irritably

deprecate the rather large percentage of income claimed by the Prayer-Book for the necessities of the poor. But such harmless foibles in no way impaired the affectionate respect entertained for him by the public, a feeling that has been cordially extended to his deservedly popular descendants.

This chapter must not close without a few words concerning the Royal Princesses, the sisters of the Regent. As young women, they have been delightfully depicted by observant "little Burney," who certainly owed them a deep debt of gratitude during her dire days of servitude in the suite of Queen Charlotte. At that period they all had a certain comeliness, of which the Royal limners naturally made the most, together with a geniality of manner and sweetness of disposition that rendered them extremely popular with the Royal Household. If rumour is to be credited, the dreary humdrum life at their parents' Court drove more than one of them to take refuge in a private

marriage, and there is a harrowing story connected with the last days of Princess Amelia which, if true, quite sufficiently accounts for the King's sudden return of insanity about that time. It was said that when she recognized that her end was approaching, the Princess asked to speak with her father alone, and at the interview intimated that she had a confession to make. She then informed the King that she had been privately married, and hoped that he would forgive her. Though naturally a good deal shocked, the King tried to conceal his feelings, and gently told her that she was forgiven, but added that he must know who her husband was. The poor girl, in great distress, answered that he was one of the Royal Household, adding by way of softening the blow, that he was at least a person for whom his Majesty had always shown a marked partiality.

"What is his name?" inquired the King hurriedly.

"General Fitz Roy, Sire," answered the Princess somewhat reassured.

With an exclamation of horror the King turned from the dying girl and hastened out of the room. He too had his secret. General Fitz Roy was his illegitimate son.

Only one of the old Greek tragedies could furnish a similar situation. Whether it is founded on fact the secret annals of the Royal Family can alone testify, but there is very little doubt that the Princess was privately married to a member of her father's household, which included a General Fitz Roy, and the circumstance that in after years a son of another of the King's Equerries had to be negotiated with relative to various documents which were supposed to be compromising to certain members of the Royal Family lends some colour to the foregoing story.

The last years of George III's public life were crowded with pathetic scenes, one of the most touching being connected with the

beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox, for whom he always retained the romantic feeling of his early youth. As is well known, Lady Sarah, while still little more than a girl, broke her marriage vows, and, though soon renouncing the man with whom she had eloped, was not impeccable in the years that followed prior to her second marriage. But in spite of all, George III always maintained for her a tenderness of regard which seemed to strengthen with the advance of years. It is recorded how one night when attending the theatre with the Queen and the Princesses he chanced to see a lady in an opposite box who reminded him of Lady Sarah, and from that moment looked no more at the play, but gazing at her fixedly kept murmuring to himself: "How like Lady Sarah! Poor Lady Sarah!" Not long afterwards, in his last year of active sovereignty, while he was still able to hold the small evening Drawing-rooms, on the list of débutantes proposing to attend one of these Courts

there appeared the name of "Lady Sarah Lennox," the daughter of a Duke of Richmond of a younger generation. The Court authorities knowing, however, the King's sensibility to anything connected with the name, requested that if the young lady had any other Christian name it might be used instead for the purposes of presentation. But unluckily this did not happen to be the case, and the presentation had to be made under the familiar designation, though apparently the King was prepared beforehand for the fact. On the name being announced and the girl advancing to make her curtsey, the King who was then on the verge of total blindness asked her if she would do him a favour.

"Certainly, Sir," was the answer.

"Then," continued the King, "would you be so good as to come quite close to me and allow me to pass my hands over your face?"

The girl complied, whereupon the King bending forward, slowly passed his hands

over her face evidently trying to discover if her features bore any likeness to those of her famous namesake, all the while the tears trickling down his cheeks.

But perhaps, even more touching was an incident that took place during one of the old King's infrequent intervals of lucidity, when the Princess Elizabeth had, at his special request, read him his favourite play, *King Lear*. "Ah," he murmured, "I have become like poor Lear, old and blind and feeble, but," he added, tremulously raising his voice, "thank God, I have no Goneril nor Regan. No, no," turning his sightless eyes lovingly towards his daughters, "all Cordelias, all Cordelias."

## The Government

THE Tory Administration which confronted the Prince of Wales when he first assumed the Regency, was by no means an imposing array; nor did its Chief, though an adroit enough debater and something more than the mere figurehead represented by his predecessor, the Duke of Portland, impress the nation as the type of man to whom it could look with confidence in the dangers and difficulties of that momentous period. But as Addington a few years before had so signally experienced, mediocrity is under certain conditions a more valuable qualification for political leadership than genius, and thus it came about that Perceval with little better equipment than a dexterous tongue and "Nisi Prius" acumen was

enabled to carry off a prize which, in spite of his splendid abilities, was withheld from Canning. The causes are not far to seek. They were purely of a personal character. Mr. Perceval, notwithstanding his intellectual inferiority, had certain recommendations which, if they counted for little with the country, were all powerful with his Party: he was an aristocrat, supremely amiable, and transparently straightforward, while his brilliant rival was not only seriously handicapped by his parentage, but united to an impatient and haughty temper a tendency to deviousness which, though never amounting to questionable conduct, created a degree of prejudice that affected him more or less to the end of his life.

Canning had inaugurated his career under the auspices of the Whigs, from whom he very soon transferred his allegiance to the rival Party, an act of precocious apostasy which inspired one of Colonel Fitzpatrick's most felicitous epigrams:

The turning of coats so common has grown
That no one thinks now to attack it;
Yet never before has an instance been known
Of a schoolboy turning his jacket!

The defection, however (if such it can be called), had ample justification, for with the fate of such gifted adherents as Burke and Sheridan before his eyes, it is scarcely surprising that the brilliant young recruit should have quickly realized that however welcome as a subordinate, he had small chance of being admitted by the proud Whig oligarchy to any appreciable share of power. The Tories were not only less exclusive, but stood in far greater need of promising material than their opponents. Consequently under their banner Canning advanced by rapid strides, and when little more than thirty held an important official position from which early promotion to Cabinet rank seemed practically assured. His mortification, therefore, may be imagined when by Pitt's unexpected resignation in 1801 he found

himself suddenly checked in his upward course and compelled to behold his *bête noire*, the preposterous Addington, masquerading in his august patron's mantle! Mr. Pitt, who declined to take the new Premier seriously, at first smiled, then shrugged his shoulders and retired disdainfully to Walmer; but his mercurial protégé was by no means so philosophical. Chafing at his own untoward fate and at the same time honestly indignant at Pitt's prolonged supersession by a nonentity who had professedly only assumed office as his *locum tenens*, Canning proceeded to agitate, in and out of season, for the displacement of the intruder and the restoration of his Chief by methods which were often far from judicious and in some instances distinctly derogatory. Lord Malmesbury, who at this period acted as a kind of moderator to the impetuous young politician, gives a very just estimate of his character which those who are disposed to judge him too severely would do well to study.

"Canning," he writes, "has been *forced* like a thriving plant in a well-managed hot-house; he has prospered too luxuriantly—has felt no check or frost. Too early in life he has had many and too easy advantages. This added to very acute parts, makes him impatient of control. Astonished to find obstacles and difficulties in his way; angry with those who conceive less quickly and eagerly than himself, or who will not keep pace with him in his rapid plans and views, and indulging in an innate principle of vanity, he underrates others and *appears* arrogant and contemptuous, though really not so. This checks the right and gradual growth of his abilities, lessens their effect, and vitiates the very many excellent, honourable, and amiable qualities he possesses. The world who judge him from this, judge him hastily and unfairly; his success accounts for his manners. Rapid prosperity never creates popularity, and it requires a most careful and conciliatory conduct to make the two compatible."

Some few years later Lord Malmesbury amplified this well-balanced diagnosis:

Canning possesses the peculiar talent of justifying ably and forcibly all he does, or wishes to be done;

and that so rapidly and eloquently that it is very difficult not to be carried away by what he says. He is unquestionably very clever, very essential to Government; but he is *hardly yet a Statesman*, and his dangerous habit of quizzing (which he cannot restrain) would be most unpopular in any department which required pliancy, tact or conciliating behaviour. He is honourable and honest, with a dash of the Irishman, and all his plans and ideas of governing would partake of this, and might be as dangerous in practice as he makes them appear plausible by the eloquent way in which he expresses them.

With such characteristics it is easily intelligible that Canning was neither a comfortable nor an accommodating colleague, and though in the Duke of Portland's Administration of 1807 his ambition was at first gratified by the conferment of Cabinet rank and the office of Foreign Secretary, it was not long before he was involved in a series of misunderstandings and disagreements which culminated in his angry retirement from the Ministry and "an affair of honour"

with Lord Castlereagh, in which that usually amiable nobleman exhibited a degree of bloodthirstiness which, had he been a better shot, would have unquestionably placed him in a very serious situation.

This brief divergence will suffice to explain how it was that Perceval, and not his infinitely more gifted rival, became the Duke of Portland's successor. It has been the fashion to rate Perceval even below Addington owing largely to the poignant *persiflage* of Sydney Smith. "Grant you all that you write," he remarks in one of his "Peter Plymley" letters, "I say I fear that he will ruin Ireland and pursue a line of policy destructive to the true interests of his country, and then you tell me that he is faithful to Mrs. Perceval and kind to the Master Percevals! These are undoubtedly the first qualifications to be looked to in a time of the most serious danger. But somehow or other, if public and private virtues must always be incompatible, I should prefer that

he destroyed the domestic happiness of Wood and Cockell, owed for the veal of the preceding year, whipped his boys, and saved his country."

This genial contempt, though capital reading, was by no means fair measure. At the same time, Perceval was far from meriting the reputation for statesmanship accorded to him by certain partial friends and biographers. The utmost that can be said for him is that he was a second-rate Minister who might possibly have made a first-rate judge. As a Law Officer of the Crown, if not brilliant, he was thoroughly capable, and when at the close of Pitt's second Administration he resigned the office of Attorney General, it was little thought that within less than eighteen months he would reappear on the Treasury Bench no more a "gentleman of the long robe," but as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. His career was from one point of view unique. He is the only instance of an ex-Attorney General being promoted to the Leadership

of the House with the reversion of the Premiership. Dunning (Lord Ashburton) forsook the law for the Duchy of Lancaster; Sir John Campbell also did so, though only temporarily; while in our own day Sir Henry James, after an interval as ex-Attorney General, likewise accepted the same political office, all three being accorded Cabinet rank; but Perceval's aggrandisement was far more rapid and striking, and would certainly have been impossible but for the peculiar conditions of the times in which it occurred.

Though Canning's direct reason for leaving the Duke of Portland's Cabinet was his difference with Castlereagh, it is certain that he would not have consented to serve under Perceval, who he had hoped might be diverted to the Woolsack and thus leave for him the succession to the Premiership. But apart from the discountenance of his colleagues, he laboured under the disadvantage of being unpalatable to George III, who found him far too self-reliant as a Foreign

Secretary to favour his appointment as Prime Minister. Canning, therefore, remained aloof from Perceval's Administration, and though he returned to the Cabinet for a time under Lord Liverpool, it was only to occupy an unimportant position. Indeed, but for an unexpected stroke of Fate, he would in all likelihood never have recovered his lost ground, and have gone down to posterity with his dazzling promise virtually unredeemed.

The obstacle to Canning's early return to office was Lord Castlereagh, who had rejoined the Government under Lord Liverpool as Foreign Secretary, with the lead of the House of Commons. Castlereagh was willing to make way for Canning at the Foreign Office but not to surrender the Leadership of the House, without which Canning's friends advised him, very injudiciously, that he ought not to re-enter the Cabinet. From the standpoint of ability, Canning's claims were, no doubt, in-

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH.

(After the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.)

finitely superior to those of Castlereagh ; but on the other hand, his acquisition of Cabinet rank had been of later date, while it is questionable whether he would have been by any means acceptable as leader to the Party at large, to say nothing of the majority of the Cabinet. At all events, Lord Liverpool declined to give way, and Castlereagh was confirmed in the leadership which together with the Foreign Office Seals he continued to hold during the most stirring decade of the century. He was, indeed, in some respects the most prominent political figure of the Regency period. The eldest surviving son of a well-born and affluent Ulsterman who began life as plain Mr. Stewart and ended it as Marquis of Londonderry, having in little more than twenty years attained every grade of the peerage save the highest, Lord Castlereagh first made his mark as the artificer of the Irish Union under the auspices of Pitt, a capacity in which though personally incorrupt he resorted to corruption on a scale unprecedented even in the days of Walpole.

Superbly handsome, and of peculiarly commanding presence, he owed not a little to the embellishments of nature, though, if reliance is to be placed on Lawrence's pencil, the almost classic beauty of his features was haunted by a melancholy that was probably the forerunner of the mysterious derangement which led to his tragic end. There is a weird story bearing on that too memorable event which is, we believe, very little known.

In his early days, when as Captain Stewart he held a commission in an Irish Militia regiment, Lord Castlereagh, while wild duck shooting, managed to get benighted and sought the hospitality of a country house which he was lucky enough to come across in the course of his nocturnal wanderings. The host, one of the old school of "open-house" Irish squires, not only gave him a hearty welcome, but on bidding him good-night, after a convivial evening over cards and claret, insisted that he should prolong his stay for some

shooting which had been arranged for the following day. Captain Stewart willingly accepted the invitation, and retired to his room, a large bed-chamber with an immense old-fashioned fire-place, in which, however, owing to the mildness of the weather, he had declined to have a fire. He got into bed, and was about to extinguish the candle, when happening to glance at the hearth he saw, to his surprise, an extremely handsome youth standing in the fire-place and gazing fixedly at him. He immediately called to the youth and asked him what he was doing there, and what he wanted. But the boy made no answer, and a moment or two afterwards seemed to dissappear up the open chimney. After pondering on the incident for a few minutes, Captain Stewart came to the conclusion that the youth must have been one of his fellow guests (a somewhat uproarious throng), who, elevated with their long potations, had indulged in a practical joke at his expense. Considerably displeased at what he considered

this unwarrantable liberty, Captain Stewart on coming down to breakfast the next morning coldly intimated to his host that he had changed his mind about joining the shooting party, and proposed to leave at once. The master of the house, taken aback by this unaccountable alteration in his guest's demeanour, anxiously inquired if anything had happened to annoy him. "Well," replied Stewart, "since you ask me, I will frankly own that I do not care to remain in a house where practical jokes are played on a stranger." Not a little indignant at the suggestion of so flagrant a breach of hospitality, the host angrily inquired whether any one present had been guilty of a practical joke on the Captain. Upon all the company responding with an emphatic denial, Stewart remarked that, of course, he accepted their disclaimers, but that something had occurred in his room the previous night which he could only explain by the supposition that it had originated with some inmate of the house. He then described

the figure in the fire-place. His fellow guests laughed incredulously, and hinted at nightmare, while the host turned the subject, as Stewart fancied a little constrainedly, by making some similar suggestion and begging the Captain to think no more of it. Stewart, however, still thought that some trick had been played on him, and though professing to be mollified persisted in carrying out his intention of leaving.

After his departure, the master of the house confided to one of the company that though he had made light of the matter to Captain Stewart, it was by no means the fiction he had sought to represent. "The truth is," he continued, "the figure seen by the Captain was an apparition that is supposed to haunt that room, though I have never seen it, nor has any one else, I believe, for many a long year. The youth that appeared to him was 'The Radiant Boy,' and the tradition is that whoever sees it will attain a great position, and then, at the height of his fame and

prosperity, come to a violent end." The legend is well attested, and certainly accorded exactly with Castlereagh's career.

As a statesman Lord Castlereagh combined with a certain degree of business capacity one fatal disqualification; he was an execrable speaker both in matter and style, and it is no small testimony to the prestige he had acquired by his personality that his grotesque incoherencies and lapses in prosody did not overwhelm him with the ridicule that has been the fate of many less incompetent speakers. Though a signal failure in the War department, at the Foreign Office he contrived to acquit himself with less discredit, considering the difficulties that beset him, and if at the great continental congresses no match for the astute Foreign diplomatists he at least commanded the respect invariably accorded to loftiness of tone and consummate distinction of bearing. His long race, as it may almost be termed, with Canning, and the dramatic incidents attending it, would furnish excellent material for a

political novel. Born in the same year, the one an aristocrat, the other an adventurer : educated at the same school, enlisting under the same great leader, whose confidence they both enjoyed : both Secretaries of State in the Portland Administration, and both involved in the same disastrous enterprise (Walcheren), resulting in an antagonism which if subsequently disguised was never wholly extinguished : the simultaneous retirement of both from office, which later on both re sumed : Canning for several years to all appearance so hopelessly distanced that he was on the eve of accepting ostracism in the shape of a proconsulship, when by the unexpected self-extinction of his successful rival the course was suddenly left clear for him, and disclosing for the first time his true form, he shot forward to the long coveted goal.

When Canning vacated the Foreign Office in 1809 he was succeeded by a statesman who should have been a tower of strength to the debilitated Government, namely the

Marquis Wellesley, ex-Governor General of India and one of Pitt's most intimate and trusted friends. Lord Wellesley, whose services in India were of the highest order, returned on the expiration of his term of office a disappointed man. Lord Rosebery's sparkling monograph on Pitt contains some correspondence which fully explains Lord Wellesley's grievance, and places on record his great chieftain's lofty contempt for mere titular distinctions. But Pitt's kind, almost affectionate, efforts to console his friend were of little avail. "The gilt Irish potato," as the ex-Viceroy scornfully termed his modified promotion in the Peerage, stuck in his throat for the remainder of his days, and not the less by reason of the far more splendid advancement of the younger brother to whom in early days he had extended a parental and somewhat patronizing hand. The English barony which was an appendage of the Irish Marquisate afforded him but little consolation; the ennobled bullionist, Mr. Smith of Lombard Street, could boast

THE MARQUIS WELLESLEY.

(After the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.)

a similar distinction, and considering the magnitude of Lord Wellesley's services it certainly seems a little strange that, since he so ardently desired it, an English marquisate was withheld from him. A score of nonentities had during that and the previous reign been accorded a like distinction in return for mere borough-mongering accommodation, and it is probable that but for stubborn resistance at headquarters Pitt would have humoured the whim of his gifted friend, little as he was able to sympathize with it. The King, however, was not too well disposed to Lord Wellesley, the magnificence of whose oriental sway he probably regarded as something more than viceregal, while he felt by no means assured of the noble Lord's soundness on the burning question of Catholic Emancipation. Accordingly, the splendid proconsul, like so many of his predecessors and successors in office, found himself on his return to England more or less " a negligible quantity," a *status* which the death of his patron Pitt not a little

accentuated. Under these circumstances even such a bagatelle as a second-rate embassy, however much below his deserts, was not altogether to be despised, and though diplomacy at Madrid was a sad "come-down" from a dictatorship at Calcutta, the Marquis condescended to repair to Spain at the instance of his appreciative young friend, Mr. Secretary Canning. He did not, however, remain there long. On Canning's resignation he was offered the Foreign Office by Perceval and accepted it with an alacrity which, but for the stateliness of his epistolary style, would have suggested a certain lack of dignity. But in joining Perceval's Government Lord Wellesley had reckoned without his Chief. A Prime Minister whose experience of the world had been mostly acquired in Westminster Hall, was not the kind of man under whom the august ex-Viceroy found it agreeable to serve. The "large views" and "enlightened policy" by which he had earned his Indian reputation were, he very soon perceived, far beyond the

scope and comprehension of "the honest little fellow" at the head of affairs. Moreover, with the exception of Lord Castlereagh (whose manners, at all events, he could not impugn, however lightly he may have held his attainments), the Marquis discovered in his colleagues a lamentable absence of that high breeding and refinement of tone which he considered indispensable in Ministerial associates. Lord Westmorland, a Bœotian nobleman who seemed mysteriously in request with all Tory Administrations, was particularly offensive to him by reason of habits which were certainly more suggestive of Squire Western than of a nineteenth century Cabinet Minister. Apart from the Earl's educational deficiencies, which were explained by a sardonic friend as due to the fact that he was born before the institution of National Schools, his manners and customs in the Council Chamber were hardly of the "Chesterfieldian" order to which the exquisite Marquis piqued himself on belonging. And it is not surprising that on a certain occasion

when, in the midst of one of the Foreign Secretary's superfine expositions on "enlightened policy," this unconventional colleague hoisted his legs on to the table, he should have elicited the following icy remonstrance: "When the noble Earl sees fit to assume a more seemly attitude, I will proceed with my observations."

In short, mediocrity and bad manners, which in Lord Wellesley's eyes embodied all the deadly sins, soon created another vacancy in the department for Foreign Affairs, and the aggrieved "grand seigneur" withdrew from political life, never to re-enter it except for two fitful terms as Irish Viceroy, one of which was identified with a worse indignity than even Lord Westmorland's indecorous posture, for during a State visit to the Dublin Theatre a black bottle was hurled at the Viceregal box, narrowly missing the classic brow immortalized by Sir Thomas Lawrence His last public appearance was in the capacity of Lord Chamberlain, a descent for which an

even more distinguished statesman, Talleyrand, had supplied a precedent.

Curious glimpses of this extraordinary man are given in the letters and diaries of his day. His private life was not exactly ideal, and his relations with his younger brother Arthur, at one time so cordial, became eventually strangely embittered, owing, it is to be feared, to overpowering jealousy on the part of the Marquis. Indeed, one of his favourite occupations in later years, when not turning elegant Latin couplets or philandering with notorious Phrynes, was (according to Jekyll) " to sit and abuse the Duke of Wellington by the hour." Sir William Gregory, of whom as a youth the Marquis took kindly notice, gives a vivid description of him towards the end of his life, when his notions of pomp and ceremony were if possible more exalted than ever. Gregory happened to be lunching with the Marquis, and on the particular footman appointed to fling open the door for the great man after meals not being forthcoming, the young guest

hurried to the rescue; whereupon Lady Wellesley overwhelmed him with gratitude for averting what evidently would have proved little less than a tragedy; "the Marquis" according to her Ladyship, "not having opened a door for himself for ten years!"

Lord Wellesley both in youth and old age was singularly handsome, though latterly, if contemporary "quidnuncs" are to be credited, he thought it necessary to invoke the artificial embellishments of rouge and burnt cork. Until quite recently a faithful replica of the portrait by Lawrence might be seen in the fashionable haunts and thoroughfares of London in the person of a well known and much appreciated member of Society, ostensibly belonging to another family, whose resemblance to the Marquis was not confined to good looks; but in the legitimate line the great statesman (for such he truly was, in spite of his foibles and affectations) left no representative, and, what is even more regrettable, is undepicted for posterity

except by a fragment of inadequate biography.

From Lord Wellesley to Lord Liverpool is a startling transition, for they were separated by as wide a gulf as that which lay between the Prince de Talleyrand and M. Adolphe Thiers! Yet, Lord Liverpool held office almost uninterruptedly for nearly thirty years, during half of which he was first Minister of the Crown, presenting another instance of the serviceableness of mediocrity! Lord Rosebery not long ago when addressing the notables of Kingston-on-Thames, the High Stewardship of which had lately been conferred on him, alluded to Lord Liverpool as one of his predecessors in that office, and genially suggested that he was far less of a Lilliputian in politics than history is disposed to allow. For that view there is certainly some foundation. It has been the custom to class Lord Liverpool with such effete ministers as Lord Bute, the Duke of Grafton, Mr. Addington and Lord Goderich, but, it is submitted, with very little

justice. One of his chief disparagers was Lady Hester Stanhope, who, owing to some private pique, elected to describe him as little short of imbecile, unwilling, for instance, to take any important step without first consulting his housekeeper! But against the depreciation of such a well known "eccentric" as Lady Hester, we have the testimony of no less an authority than Canning who, though well aware of Lord Liverpool's limitations, never failed to credit him with sound administrative ability; indeed, while notoriously resolved not to serve under Perceval, even as one of the principal Secretaries of State, Canning was willing to occupy a minor position in Lord Liverpool's Cabinet for several years. It is true that in early days his opinion of him had been less favourable, and "Jenky" (as he called him in playful reminiscence of their undergraduate intimacy) was not exempted from the epigrammatic attentions of his Muse. But as time wore on he recognized in his old college friend the sterling, business-like

qualities that had attracted the notice of Mr. Pitt, and had marked out the reserved and rather awkward young "plodder" for high office during every Administration, except that of Lord Grenville, from the beginning of the century till his incapacitation in 1827. As early as 1806, on the death of Pitt, the King offered him the Premiership, though less from actual predilection than as a desperate means of "dishing" Lord Grenville and the detested Whigs. Lord Hawkesbury, however (as he then was), wisely declined the honour, though joining the Cabinets both of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Perceval, in which he must unobtrusively have made himself decidedly a *persona grata*, for on the death of the latter Premier and the failure of the negotiations with Lords Grenville and Grey, he was elected by his colleagues to replace him.

In truth Lord Liverpool, though in some respects, perhaps, deserving Disraeli's sobriquet of "The Archmediocrity," possessed the rare gift of at once conciliating and winning the

respect of his colleagues ; while, at the same time, he contrived to hold his own at Court and to gain the esteem if not the admiration of the country at large. The Whigs of course railed against him, but no louder than they had railed against Pitt, and though demagogues like Cobbett and sentimentalists like Shelley denounced his Government in the most virulent of prose and verse, it endured, with few vicissitudes, for nearly fifteen years, the longest-lived Ministry, with the exception of Pitt's first Administration, since the days of Sir Robert Walpole. It is a significant fact that with the disappearance of Lord Liverpool from the helm the Tory Party began to show symptoms of dissolution. Differences and animosities which his admirable tact and management had kept in subjection, very soon broke out on every side, and the history of the Party for the remaining three years that elapsed before the accession of the Whigs is an almost uninterrupted record of intrigues defections, and convulsions. This is, surely,

an eloquent tribute to Lord Liverpool's qualities as a leader, if not as a ruler, and it is to be regretted that the world knows so little and has been taught to hold so lightly one who, had he combined with his solid gifts a little adventitious glitter, would probably have been accorded no inconsiderable rank among English statesmen.

There was another Tory member of the Regency Administrations who, though far from being a statesman, cannot be wholly passed over, namely the indispensable Lord Sidmouth, to whom, as Addington, reference has already been made. This individual, considering his moderate abilities, was perhaps the most fortunate politician of the nineteenth century. The son of a provincial physician who had alleviated Lord Chatham's gout, and fortified the juvenile constitution of William Pitt, he was so well "sponsored" by the younger of his father's illustrious patients that abjuring Lincoln's Inn and the drudgery of equity-drafting he found himself

quite early in life not only in Parliament, but one of the most favoured protégés of an all-powerful minister. His patron, however, was evidently not impressed with his political ability, as he carefully abstained from appointing him to any ministerial office, but on the Speakership becoming vacant in 1789, Addington was at once apprised that, if the post accorded with his views, his candidature would be duly supported. Accordingly by a wave, so to speak, of his august patron's hand, he was installed in the Speaker's Chair which he filled with tolerable success for something over ten years, though, of course, entirely under the domination of the Prime Minister, who in the famous *fracas* with Tierney, contemptuously ignored his intervention and insisted in forcing his opponent into a duel, which instead of attempting to stop the Speaker actually attended on the Sabbath Day in the recesses of a suburban common! If the police, who must surely have got wind of so notable an

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY ADDINGTON,

Speaker of the House of Commons and Prime Minister, subsequently Viscount Sidmouth.

(After the portrait by J. S. Copley, R.A.)

affair, had done their duty the country would have been regaled with the unprecedented scandal of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House of Commons being arraigned at Bow Street for being concerned in a duelling adventure on the Lord's Day!

The events which led to Addington's transference from the Chair to the seat vacated by his patron on the Treasury Bench are too well known to need recapitulation. In a sentence, the situation may be summed up thus: The King and Pitt having quarrelled over Catholic Emancipation they both turned to Addington, whom the King selected as a manageable mediocrity, and Pitt welcomed as an obsequious *locum tenens*. But both proved mistaken. The King found the new minister pompous and pragmatical, while to Pitt his once subservient protégé exhibited all the airs and graces of the proverbial beggar on horseback and, so far from regarding himself as a "stop-gap," presumed to strut as the inspired successor of a discredited minister!

No wonder the country held its breath in something like consternation, and Napoleon hailed the spectacle as a convincing proof of the King of England's insanity! With the nation's very existence at stake, one of the greatest Statesmen of all time postponed to an official pettifogger, proficient in routine and prodigal of red-tape! Canning's campaign against "the Doctor," as he delighted to dub him, may have been in certain respects derogatory, and unpalatable to Pitt, but it is probable that his ridicule contributed more towards displacing Addington than all the oratorical attacks in Parliament. His derisive couplets were many, but perhaps the most trenchant was the following which, though never actually claimed by him, it is difficult to attribute to any other pen:

Sous ce marbre, passant,
Le Sieur Addington gît,
Ministre soi-disant,
Médecin malgré lui!

The only meritorious act recorded of

Addington is that he refused an Earldom, which George III eagerly proffered in the first ecstacy of getting rid of him! How terribly he bored even that illustrious worshipper of mediocrity may be gathered from the fact that he is the only individual on record who goaded the usually decorous monarch into the use of an unrepeatable expression: "That (then follow several deplorably significant asterisks) "has been haranguing me this morning for more than a couple of hours." A grievous change from "my minister" and all the flattering endearments of three years before!

After his congé in 1804 Addington (whom Pitt had wisely wheedled into entering the House of Lords), at the head of a small pack of place-hunters whose votes could not safely be neglected, managed to make himself a quantity to be reckoned with by every Administration, and finally in the capacity of Home Secretary he had the distinction of exciting the opprobrium of Mr. Shelley (by

whom he was compared rather grotesquely to Hypocrisy mounted on a crocodile), and of bringing the country within measurable distance of Revolution. But in 1822 the nation had had enough of him, and he thereafter lived in retirement in Richmond Park, complacently imbibing port wine, and comparing grievances with his old fellow-bigot, ex-Chancellor Eldon.

The Chancellor, though an infinitely abler man than Lord Sidmouth, was, if possible, even more reactionary. "Change" was a word rigidly excluded from his vocabulary, except where retrogression chanced to be concerned.

The bare suggestion of Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, or the amelioration of the Criminal Law he solemnly regarded as an insult to God and treason to the King. During nearly a quarter of a century's uninterrupted tenure of the great Seal, he invariably figured in the Cabinet as the inveterate opponent of innovation. In private

life benevolent and humane, his political idiosyncracies led him to resist the abolition of capital punishment for a theft of five shillings as strenuously as if it had been a question of annulling the Constitution, though from the following passage in Sir Samuel Romilly's Diary it will be seen that his objections were shared by very select company. "The second reading of the Bill to abolish capital punishment for the crime of stealing privately to the amount of five shillings in a shop came on to-day in the House of Lords on the motion of Lord Holland, who had taken charge of the Bill. It was rejected by a majority of 31 to 11; the Ministers having procured a pretty full attendance of peers, considering the advanced season of the year, to throw it out. Among them were no less than seven prelates: the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Bishops of London and Salisbury; Dampier, Bishop of Ely; Luxmore, Bishop of Hereford; Sparke, the new Bishop of Chester; and Porter, an Irish Bishop. I rank

these Prelates among the members who were solicited to vote against the Bill, because I would rather be convinced of their servility towards government, than that recollecting the mild doctrines of their religion, they could have come down to the House spontaneously to vote that transportation for life is not a sufficiently severe punishment for the offence of pilfering what is of five shillings value, and that nothing but the blood of the offender can afford an adequate atonement for such a transgression." This exhibition on the part of the self-styled "Ambassadors of God" would have been shocking enough had it taken place in Spain during the days of the Inquisition, but that it should have been possible in such a country as England in the nineteenth century brands the Episcopal Bench of that time with an ineffaceable stigma.

Except as the arch-antagonist of change, Lord Eldon did not concern himself much with politics and was indeed in many respects

so unsatisfactory a colleague that such an orthodox Tory as the Duke of Wellington positively declined to include him in his Cabinet, in spite of George IV's express request that the ex-Chancellor should receive office. The Duke's objections are recorded in a letter to the King which so tersely sums up Lord Eldon's characteristics in Council as to be well worth reproducing.

"SUDBORNE, *October* 14, 1828.

"I have well considered your Majesty's motion of calling Lord Eldon to Your Majesty's Council as Lord President, prevailing upon Lord Bathurst to accept the office of Lord Privy Seal.

"Lord Eldon's character, knowledge, and qualities would be a great advantage to any Administration. But having been long in the Cabinet with Lord Eldon I must tell your Majesty that he is very little disposed to take upon himself the lead of and responsibility for the measures of the Government for which he is so highly qualified, and he is as little disposed to support in public the decision to which the majority may have come. I have no personal objection to Lord Eldon, but such habits render him an inconvenient colleague to the Minister who has to conduct your Majesty's

business in the House of Lords, and I must add that he would be found much more inconvenient on the Treasury Bench than he was heretofore on theWoolsack."

Of this pungent depreciation the old lord was in blissful ignorance, and, deeming it impossible that he could have been excluded on his merits, naïvely attributed the untoward circumstance to feminine influence, which, failing any palpable cause, was promptly fixed upon by disappointed aspirants as the *fons et origo* of George IV's disfavour! However, although politically ostracized, he did not altogether discontinue his favourite rôle, for when the Duke of Wellington reluctantly recognized that Catholic Emancipation was inevitable, and was arduously toiling to overcome the King's prejudice against it, old Eldon deemed it his duty to invade the Royal sanctum, and to harangue the distracted monarch by the hour on the iniquity of the measure. Harassed by the conflicting claims of the country and of his conscience, the unhappy

King alternately gave pledges to Wellington and promises to Eldon, devoutly wishing both at the bottom of the sea. Yielding, however, eventually to the *force majeure* of the Prime Minister he granted his assent to the Bill, an act of perfidy which the ex-Chancellor thus tragically records: "The fatal Bill received the Royal Assent yesterday afternoon. After all I heard in my visits, not a day's delay! God bless us, and His Church."

The final pious adjuration recalls the fact that Lord Eldon honoured the Church rather in its abstract than in its concrete character, being no more a frequenter of divine worship than his brother Lord Stowell, the Ecclesiastical Judge, at whose expense he perpetrated a sally which, if a little ponderous, was by no means inapt. On Lord Stowell's death, Lord Eldon was condoled with by some effusive Churchman, who bewailed the departed judge as a "pillar of the Church." "I think, sir," responded Lord Eldon, "that my brother would have been more appropriately described

as a buttress of the Church, for to my certain knowledge he was never inside one ! "

Lord Eldon's shortcomings as a statesman were more than atoned for by his qualities as a judge. In spite of one not inconsiderable defect : a tendency to over-deliberation, he ranks as the greatest equity judge of the nineteenth century, and to his vast legal attainments he united the all important accessories of justice and dignity in the highest degree. Shelley, it is true, incensed at being deprived by the Chancellor of the custody of his children, depicted him in even more lurid colours than he did Sidmouth, but Shelley's conduct and opinions being what they were, the Chancellor had no choice but to make the order so bitterly resented by the poet. He was actuated by no personal or political bias, but merely based his decision on well-established principles of the Court of Chancery. There is, therefore, as much injustice as absurdity in the ferocious couplets :

Next came Fraud, and he had on
Like Lord Eldon, an ermine gown;
His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to millstones as they fell;

And the little children, who
Round his feet played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem,
Had their brains knocked out by them.

The only passage in these lines for which there is any sort of foundation is that which alludes to Lord Eldon's lachrymosity, but though occasionally rather too ready to flow his tears were by no means of the crocodile genus. If politically wedded to Draconian principles he was personally a man of sympathetic, and even tender, feeling as was strongly evidenced after the lamentable death of Sir Samuel Romilly, one of the leading practitioners in his Court. Though of the opposite Party and bitterly averse to what he considered Sir Samuel's mistaken philanthropy, when, on taking his seat, his eye fell upon Romilly's vacant place, he was

so overcome that he was compelled to leave the Bench, to which he did not return for the remainder of the day.

It is satisfactory to record that Lord Eldon lived long enough to see his gloomy predictions falsified, and to find Church and State even more firmly established under Queen Victoria, than in the days of proscribed Catholics and unrepresentative Parliaments.

Let us now pass from Cabinet magnates to a couple of minor ministers who were destined in after years to figure illustriously in the political arena, namely Lord Palmerston and Sir Robert, then Mr. Robert, Peel.

Palmerston, whom even middle-aged men can remember in their school-days as the great national Prime Minister, had early aspired to Parliamentary honours, having stood for the vacancy at the University of Cambridge caused by the death of Pitt, and, though unsuccessful, he shortly afterwards found a seat elsewhere, entering the House very nearly sixty years before his death removed him from

it in 1865. His political career was in one respect very remarkable, for without once incurring the charge of inconsistency, he was a member of every Administration, Whig Tory, and composite, except those of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Derby, from 1807 till the time of his death ; while with three exceptions—Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Rosebery—every Prime Minister of the nineteenth century since Lord Grenville had been at one time or another his colleague. Accordingly, he could boast experiences such as no other English statesman has had an opportunity of acquiring.

The advent of Perceval to power was a memorable event for Lord Palmerston, who, though little more than twenty-five, was offered by the new Premier no less a post than that of Chancellor of the Exchequer with, of course, a seat in the Cabinet. But the young politician with rare wisdom declined the dazzling preferment, and contented himself with the subordinate office of Secretary-at-War, which

at that time was little more than an Under-secretaryship, the Secretaryship-for-War being then combined with that for the Colonies. In this office Palmerston remained during the momentous epoch of the Peninsular War and Waterloo, seldom speaking except on routine subjects, and though assiduously discharging his duties, not neglecting to mingle in the brilliant Regency Society as a man of pleasure and fashion. It was not until the succeeding reign, when on the verge of middle-age, that he acquired the Cabinet rank so prudently refused by him in his novitiate, though if George IV could have had his way, his promotion would have taken a far less congenial form. Lord Palmerston, whose personal attractions had procured for him the *sobriquet* of "Cupid," had, in fact, contrived to arouse the jealousy of his susceptible sovereign, who cajoled Canning, then Foreign Secretary, to try to get rid of the too fascinating Viscount by transporting him to a safe distance as Governor of Jamaica.

The interview at which the offer was made must have been as embarrassing to Canning as it was diverting to Palmerston, who promptly declined the lure with a burst of genial laughter! But, nothing daunted, the King returned to the charge and authorized Canning to dangle a more glittering bait, namely, the Governor-Generalship of India. This offer, though received less disdainfully, Palmerston likewise declined, with what effect on his sovereign history does not record, but certainly with satisfactory results to himself. India was thus on two occasions the splendid exile designed by George IV for an inconvenient Minister: it was pressed upon Canning because he had befriended His Majesty's wife, and on Palmerston because he was smiled on by His Majesty's mistress! In each case, had the offer been accepted, the loss to England would have probably been far greater than the gain to India, for it is extremely unlikely that either minister would

have been allowed to reappear prominently on the political stage.

Much of Lord Palmerston's *abandon*, both in manners and conversation, which scandalized so many worthy persons in mid-Victorian days was, doubtless, a survival of the Regency, as likewise were his pronounced sporting proclivities and occasional disregard of strict decorum. It was no doubt strange to be governed in the "sixties" by a Minister whose witticisms, however excellent, were often unrepeatable, who stole from the Treasury Bench to attend prize-fights, and was sufficiently uncircumspect to be cited in his eightieth year before Sir Cresswell Cresswell! It was all very shocking, of course, but it should be remembered by way of extenuation that his introduction to Society had been in the rather questionable saloons of Melbourne House, while his earliest experiences as a Minister coincided with the carnival of Mary Anne Clarke! It is to be feared that the noble lord was far too prudent to keep a diary, but had

he done so, it would assuredly have more than compensated for the ever-to-be-regretted destruction of Byron's famous Journal.

Sir Robert Peel presented in nearly every respect a complete contrast to Lord Palmerston. The utmost they had in common was that they had been at Harrow, if not together, very nearly at the same time. Harrow, indeed, was well represented in the early Regency, Sheridan, Byron, Perceval, Palmerston, Aberdeen and Peel being all Harrovians, while Lord Wellesley enjoyed the rare distinction of being an alumnus of both the "Premier" schools. But while Palmerston's Harrow record was by no means remarkable, Peel carried everything before him, as he did afterwards at the University. Just, however, as Palmerston never quite threw off his boyishness, so Peel may be said never to have been a boy. Inheriting the prudence and sagacity which had elevated his father from the status of a yeoman to that of a manufacturer prince, he appears to have passed through

Harrow and Oxford as punctiliously and prudently as he did through life. The old man elated with the baronetcy bestowed upon him by Mr. Pitt, doubtless in recognition of the munificent contribution he had made to the War Fund, was evidently resolved that his gifted son should lack no opportunity of making a figure in the political world, for after providing him with a seat in Perceval's Parliament he penned the following somewhat tradesman-like testimonial to the Prime Minister on behalf of the young member, who had been selected to second the Address : " If he has the good fortune to be honoured with your confidence, I flatter myself he will be found deserving of the trust reposed in him. He possesses capacity, industry, and virtuous habits, and under the guidance of a judicious and well informed friend he may become a useful member of Society." When it is considered that Peel had just left Oxford with a " double-first, " this paternal appreciation certainly did not err on the side of extrava-

gance, but the old cotton-spinner probably viewed University attainments with a certain degree of suspicion, and was much more disposed to lay stress on the attributes that characterize "the industrious apprentice."

Peel always remained a trifle "bourgeois". ("there was always some of the family cotton sticking to his coat" we are told by one of his sarcastic contemporaries), and his want of manners and unconciliatory air no doubt seriously handicapped his many great qualities as a leader. His attitude to Canning was much resented by that statesman's friends and political following, but it is now generally recognized that it was not inspired by any unworthy motive, but was merely the outcome of his natural frigidity, allied to a long-standing lack of sympathy with Canning and his political principles. No two men could be more unlike; Canning was all ardour and impulse, while Peel was the essence of cautious calculation, at times almost amounting to timidity. The one rejoiced in initiative and

enterprise; the other declined to advance, except under actual compulsion. The motto of the elder statesman might be said to have been "Splendour," that of the younger "Prudence"; and it is not surprising that their ways should have lain hopelessly apart. Peel was, in fact, no more guilty of malevolence towards Canning than he was towards Disraeli, who, though himself a pronounced disparager of Canning, found it convenient, when disappointed of office, to depict him as Peel's victim, a characteristically reckless allegation which was proudly and triumphantly repelled. The utmost that Peel can be taxed with as regards Canning is that he declined to join his ministry, after having served many years as his colleague. But the reason was a perfectly logical one, and readily, though doubtless with disappointment, accepted by Canning: Peel was at that time a strong "Anti-Catholic," and Canning was regarded as a "Pro-Catholic" Premier. It is, of course, possible that there were also personal grounds,

but they were never raised by Peel nor suggested by Canning. The avowed cause was quite sufficient, and by all reasonable statesmen Peel's action has never been called in question. On the other hand what are we to say about Disraeli's conduct to Peel? There is only one word that can adequately describe it: infamous. Peel, in spite of an aversion shared by nearly the whole of the Conservative Party had magnanimously abstained from treating this tarnished adventurer (for such Disraeli was in his early days) as a political pariah, inviting him to his table (a distinction which Disraeli gloatingly vaunts) and generously complimenting him on his Parliamentary successes. But a Premier's kindness and encouragement, if leading to nothing else, are of little satisfaction to a man panting for office, and because Peel, properly alive to the dinginess of Disraeli's record, drew the line at including him in his Administration, as to the composition of which he was fastidiously scrupulous, the disappointed

aspirant, with all the insolent invective of a baffled street-beggar, turned round and embarked on a campaign of venomous vilification which only terminated with the life of his victim. With the remembrance of this dastardly conduct it is not surprising that the family and political friends of Sir Robert Peel (one of the most sensitively honourable men that ever sat in Parliament) should have found it difficult to forgive the aggressor, notwithstanding his fulsome efforts towards atonement in later years.

The account of Tory notables during the Regency would be incomplete without a few words concerning one whose name, rightly or wrongly, is regarded in these days as little better than a by-word : John Wilson Croker. He was one of the group of gifted Irishmen which at that time formed an important element in the Tory Party, namely, Wellesley, Wellington, Canning, Castlereagh, Perceval, Palmerston, and Croker. But, like more than one of the group, Croker had little of the Irish

temperament. Cold, orderly, methodical, of great business capacity, he united to high official qualifications the power of wielding a pen, if not with elegance, perhaps more exasperatingly than any political or literary writer of that time; a talent which together with an aggressive assertiveness and assumption of infallibility naturally did not tend to promote his popularity. But these characteristics scarcely explain his evil reputation with posterity for which two famous authors of a later period are mainly responsible: Macaulay and Disraeli; the former's review of Croker's edition of *Boswell's Johnson* and the latter's "Nicholas Rigby" in *Coningsby* having been accepted by the public as the unimpeachable pronouncement of competent and impartial judges. But in both cases the ink employed was largely tinctured with gall. Macaulay's hatred of Croker was apparently inspired by the veteran *Quarterly* reviewer's somewhat contemptuous attitude to the "rising hope" of the *Edinburgh*, from

whom, moreover, he, of course, violently differed in politics; but Disraeli's onslaught seems to have had no personal origin. He had never been brought into contact with Croker either in literature or politics, and probably singled him out for assault solely because he saw his way to scoring by a brilliant excursion in caricature; yet as a portrait of Croker, "Rigby" is preposterously wide of the mark, as Disraeli must well have known. But if facts were inconvenient, he thought nothing of discarding them in favour of falsification. Croker had his faults, and they were not agreeable ones, but neither the social nor political turpitude ascribed to him under the mask of "Nicholas Rigby" was among them. Had such been the case he would scarcely have been a chosen companion and confidant of the Duke of Wellington who, though subjected by his omniscient friend to correction concerning the battle of Waterloo and the proper components of copper caps, had a true regard for him and thoroughly appreciated his hon-

ourable and independent principles; an esteem which Croker handsomely reciprocated by a definition of the Duke that, assuredly, comes very near perfection: "always simple, always great."

Probably one source of Croker's unpopularity was his claim to infallibility, in most cases very arrogantly asserted. He particularly prided himself on his accuracy as to dates, a characteristic which prompted the memorable *mot* of Lord Alvanley when he was informed at White's of Croker's demise: "Croker dead! You don't say so? What a row he'll have with the recording angel over the dates of his sins!" Again, a Mrs. Houston who lived in his neighbourhood as a child declares that she was never forgiven for correcting him at dessert as to some historical date which she had just acquired in the schoolroom! The truth is that Croker, like the memorable biographer of Charles Dickens, was a "harbitrary gent," and "harbitrariness" is a delinquency that is less easily looked over

by Society than many a crime expiable at Wormwood Scrubs! If Croker had been less honourable and more urbane, for instance, a genial scamp like Sheridan, he would have gone down to posterity in comparatively favourable colours; as it is he enjoys, most unjustly, a reputation scarcely more enviable than that of Jonathan Wild.

# The Opposition

SELDOM has a great political Party been so destitute of strength in the House of Commons as were the Whigs at the beginning of the Regency. Sheridan, it is true, was a nominal adherent for the year or two before he disappeared from Parliament, but he treated the House rather as an asylum from the Sheriff's officer than as an arena for the exercise of his talents. Tierney was not without a certain reputation for business capacity and debating power, but at best he was only what Palmerston used to call a "good second-rate," and though at one time selected to lead it, he never commanded the confidence of his Party. Ponsonby, the nominal leader, who thanks to family influence had held office as Irish Chancellor, was a

rather dull cadet of the Bessborough family whose name is barely mentioned in the letters and annals of the period. Whitbread, who came more conspicuously before the public, was, indeed, a useful auxiliary but with no pretensions either to eloquence or statesmanship, while his trade was the means of attracting to him some of the sprightliest sallies of the day. Perhaps the most caustic lines ever penned by " Peter Pindar " are those in which George III and his family brewer are held up to ridicule in the same caustic couplet which purports to be an entry in His Majesty's memorandum book :

> Remember to forget to ask
> Old Whitbread to my house some day ;
> But not forget to take the cask
> Old Whitbread promised me away !

Then Canning, of course, must needs have his fling, and a very merry one it was :

> Would you know why th' eleventh of June I remember
> So much better than April or March or November

'Tis because on that day, as with pride I assure ye,
My sainted progenitor took to his brewery.
That day in the morn he began brewing beer,
That evening commenced his connubial career;
On that day he died, having finished his summing,
And the angels sang out, "Here's old Whitbread a-coming!"
So that day I hail with a smile and a sigh
For his beer with an "e" and his beer with an "i,"
And on that day each year in the hottest of weather
The whole Whitbread family feast all together.
My Lords, while the beams of this hall shall support
The roof that o'ershades this respectable Court,
Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos,
While the beams of the sun enter in at the windows,
My name shall shine bright, as my father's now shines,
Emblazoned on Journals, as his is on Signs!

The allusion in the last six lines is to Lord Melville's trial, the "squib" being in commemoration of Whitbread's rather ponderous speech on that occasion, when the Duchess of Gordon described the worthy brewer as engaged in teaching his dray-horse to caper! In these days when beer has become a power in the State and is represented by, at least, half

a dozen coronets, such pleasantries would be considered as sadly deficient in good taste ; but ninety years ago knights of the vat were still rated little higher than opulent tradesmen, who if they managed to pay their way into Parliament were liable to have their calling and commodities liberally derided without enlisting the smallest sympathy. Mr. Whitbread, moreover, though a serviceable Whig in his way was prone to indulge in various "cranks" and hobbies which he aired in Parliament with an obstinate insistence that was far from pleasing to his leaders, who were already considerably embarrassed by such vastly abler "independents" as Romilly and Brougham.

Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane, though nominally members of the Opposition, were far too Radical in their tendencies to be regarded as regularly accredited to the Party. Of Sir Francis as a politician, it is difficult to form an opinion, but it is to be feared that he was to a large extent a *poseur*,

who, like Jack Wilkes, was at heart anything but a democrat. It tickled the fancy of the mob that a wealthy, broad-acred Baronet, with "Chesterfield" manners, should embody their shibboleths in silver-tongued Parliamentary orations, and defy the Speaker and his myrmidons, seated in a Piccadilly drawing-room with a copy of Magna Charta on his knee! But their idol's surreptitious return by water from his perfunctory incarceration in the Tower, in order to avoid the turbulent ovation they had organized for him in the streets, very seriously impaired his popularity, the remaining shreds of which he eventually sacrificed by becoming (again like Wilkes) a monarchical "Moderate," solemnly taking such an orthodox Whig as Lord John Russell to task for indulging in the "cant of patriotism." Lord John profited by the sneer, for it gave him the opportunity of airing an excellent if not original repartee: "The Honourable Baronet," he observed, "thinks fit to denounce what he is pleased to term the cant

of patriotism, but I will take leave to remind the Honourable Baronet of something even more contemptible, and that is the *recant* of patriotism." Very little more was heard of Sir Francis in the political world after that, and he is now far more creditably memorable as the father of a lady whose splendid philanthropy has long since eclipsed the fleeting fame of his dilettante Republicanism.

Lord Cochrane's democracy was not much more genuine than that of Sir Francis Burdett, though considerably less prudent. In fact, if he could have had his way at the time of Burdett's siege in Piccadilly, the whole thoroughfare would have been blown up by barrels of gunpowder! Cochrane may be summed up in a sentence: desperately needy, desperately brave, and desperately unscrupulous.

It is, no doubt, an audacious thing to question the generous verdict of posterity, but it is impossible to peruse the history of Lord Cochrane's trial, recently published at the

instance of the present Lord Ellenborough, without coming to the conclusion, however reluctantly, that he was properly convicted. Any one with the most elementary knowledge of the law of evidence cannot but feel assured that if the case were re-heard to-day before the present Lord Chief Justice and a special jury the result would be no other than it was when tried by Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough. It, no doubt, seemed incredible that a man with all the makings of a second Nelson should be capable of perpetrating a despicable Stock-Exchange fraud, but unfortunately it has been proved that even the most splendid personal heroism is a quality not incompatible with the lowest standard of morality. Lord Cochrane by artfully representing himself as the martyr of political animosity, which unquestionably was carried to greater lengths in those days than at present, and by identifying his name in after years with repeated "prodigies of valour" managed eventually to secure in substance, if not in

form, an annulment of his conviction ; but in rehabilitating him, the country unconsciously cast an undeserved slur not only on one of the ablest and most honourable judges of the nineteenth century, but on some of its most distinguished and intrepid advocates. When on conviction a prisoner indiscriminately charges every one concerned in the trial—judge, jury, and counsel on both sides—as having failed in their duty, there is usually only one conclusion to be drawn, namely that he has met with his deserts. Such was the course adopted by Lord Cochrane, who was represented at the Bar, among other forensic experts, by the most eloquent, the most fearless, the most resourceful advocate of his, or perhaps any other day, Henry Brougham, who not only, be it remembered, was at that time largely in sympathy with many of Cochrane's political views, but had the overpowering incentive of unbridled ambition to ensure his straining every nerve towards scoring a triumph in so great a *cause célèbre*. Yet,

according to Cochrane, Brougham, like all the rest of his great array of counsel, was negligent and supine! All honour to the generous feeling of those responsible for Lord Cochrane's reinstatement; nevertheless, it involves a dangerous precedent when Posterity, however chivalrously, takes upon itself to stultify the well-weighed pronouncement of Justice.

At the time when Brougham appeared as Lord Cochrane's advocate he was already a promising member of the Party in which afterwards he was for a time one of the most conspicuous figures. As an advocate he had the unique distinction of representing the most illustrious client ever arraigned at an English tribunal, for whom, in spite of his conviction of her guilt, he succeeded in procuring what amounted to a verdict of acquittal. The day on which Lord Liverpool abandoned the Bill of Pains and Penalties against Queen Caroline was the most triumphant of Brougham's career. By impassioned forensic oratory, in conjunction with skilful

management, he contrived to secure a result which those of the Queen's friends who were behind the scenes had not dared to anticipate ; while all experienced lawyers who were afforded an opportunity of carefully studying the evidence had, with the exception of the quixotically chivalrous Denman, arrived at an adverse conclusion. Here is the opinion of Jekyll who had read the evidence that led to the trial. "If," he writes, "the most fertile and depraved mind were to invent a tale of private and even public profligacy, it could not equal the horrors now reduced to proof. For the honour of the nation and the security of the succession some mode must be and will be devised to repudiate and disgrace the criminal. It should have been anticipated years ago on the then accusation and testimony." Again, when the trial was on the point of closing, he writes : "Party runs so high that I keep my opinion to myself ; but as a lawyer and a man am satisfied that the evidence has proved the case." That in spite of the preva-

lence of such convictions as these, and before a tribunal of peers most of whom entered upon the trial notoriously hostile to the Queen, Brougham should have succeeded, not, indeed, in actually defeating the Bill, but in reducing the majority of its supporters to the narrow margin of twenty-eight, was a feat that was well calculated to place a "stuff-gownsman" (as he then was) in public estimation, at all events, at the head of his profession. The achievement was all the more remarkable by reason of the disastrous peroration of his coadjutor Denman, whose famous "Go and sin no more" not only "gave away" his client, but afforded the Solicitor-General (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst) an opportunity of scoring with signal effect. "My Lords," he said in concluding his judicial and dignified reply, "if in looking at the evidence, although you should have the strongest conviction on your mind that the Queen is guilty of the charges that are imputed to her in this Bill, you should yet think that in strictness there is no legal

proof on which you can judiciously act, I admit that you must adopt the language suggested by my learned friend Mr. Denman and say, "Go and sin no more." But the advantage so dexterously taken of Denman's incredible blunder was powerless to neutralize the effect of Brougham's torrential eloquence, though the Clubs, according to the custom of those more vivacious days, celebrated Mr. Denman's "slip" in the well-known epigram—

> Gracious Lady, we implore,
> Go away and sin no more!
> Or if that effort be too great,
> Go away at any rate!

Brougham was at this time unquestionably regarded as the future chief of the Whig Party, with a certain prospect in due course of the Premiership. How far these anticipations would have been realized if he had not shelved himself by taking the Great Seal in Lord Grey's "Reform" Administration, it is difficult to say, but the probability is that his almost insane vanity and propensity to

indulge in " blazing indiscretions " would have been no less fatal to his chances of Cabinet supremacy than they proved to his continuance on the Woolsack. Early in life he was more under control, but the renown he gained from the Queen's trial, followed later on by his triumphant return for Yorkshire, completely turned a head, never too well balanced, and one year of office as Chancellor sufficed to indicate that so far from being qualified to be a leader he was altogether impossible as a colleague. Accordingly, on the return of the Whigs to power in 1835, to his inextinguishable resentment his services were dispensed with, and from that time till his death, more than thirty years afterwards, he degenerated into a species of political Ishmael, turning his hand against every man, but, above all, against his quondam associates.

What actually passed between Lord Melbourne and Lord Brougham at the interview when the latter was informed that he could not return to the Woolsack, has never

transpired. But it is well known that Lord Melbourne spent a good deal more than a *mauvais quart d'heure*. According to Brougham, the reason given by Melbourne was that if reappointed the Lord Chancellor would by dint of his enormous intellectual superiority reduce the Prime Minister to little better than a cypher. It is quite possible that some such reason was thrown in by Melbourne who was anxious, on every ground, to let his old colleague down as gently as possible, and he was, of course, aware that there was no better means of doing so than by the administration of undiluted flattery. But the real reason has been disclosed by Earl Russell, who states in *His Recollections and Suggestions* that—

"the objections came first from Lord Melbourne and were frankly communicated by him to Lord Brougham. His faults were a recklessness of judgment which hurried him beyond the bounds of prudence, an omnivorous appetite for praise, a perpetual interference in matters with which he had no direct concern, and above all, a

disregard for truth. His vast powers of mind were neutralized by a want of judgment, which prevented any party from placing entire confidence in him, and by a frequent forgetfulness of what he himself had done or said but a short time before. It was for these reasons that many weeks before the change of government Lord Melbourne resolved not to offer the Great Seal to Lord Brougham. He told me of his fixed resolution on this head many weeks before the dissolution of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry. Observing, as I did, the characters of the two men, I thought Lord Melbourne justified in his decision, and I willingly stood by him in his difficulties."

Another factor which must not be overlooked was the antipathy of William IV which had become unconquerable after Brougham's conduct when His Majesty dismissed the Melbourne Government in the preceding year. On learning the news from Melbourne, Brougham in a transport of fury dispatched a communication to *The Times*, in which he took upon himself to state that "the Queen had done it all." The authorship of this insulting and absolutely unfounded

assertion soon leaked out, and the King very naturally objected to the culprit being ever again appointed the "keeper of his conscience."

With all his great gifts Brougham had few of the qualities that make a great man. Without wholly endorsing Harriet Martineau's scathing indictment of him, one is forced to the conclusion that envy, hatred, and malice were painfully prominent traits in his character. If he performed kind and generous actions very few of them have been recorded by the multitude of men and women with whom he came into contact during his life of nearly ninety years. That he should have waged relentless war on those who discarded him is not surprising, however largely his own failures were responsible for his ostracism, but that he should have left no stone unturned to discredit and crush a young man just embarking on life for no other reason than that he had revealed brilliant promise was nothing short of dastardly. Such, it is painful to record,

was his conduct to Macaulay whom, though the son of an old friend, he not only contemptuously ignored on circuit, but with peculiar malevolence sought to damage whenever an opportunity offered. One of many instances of his shabby treatment of Macaulay appears in the following extract from a letter of Brougham to Macvey Napier, the Editor of *The Edinburgh Review*.

"As to Macaulay I only know that he left his party which had twice given him seats in Parliament for nothing, while they were labouring for want of hands in Parliament, and jumped at promotion and gain in India. But what think you of his never having called on me since his return? Yet I made him a Commissioner of Bankrupts in 1827 to the exclusion of my own brother." [An untruth—Lord Lyndhurst gave Macaulay the post in 1828.] "I gave his father a commissionership to the exclusion of his Whig supporters, and I gave his brother a place in Africa to the exclusion of a friend of my own. Yet on returning from India he suffers his fears of giving offence at Holland House to prevent him from doing what he never feared to do while I was in office. As he is the second or third greatest bore in society I have ever known, and I have little

time to be bored, I don't at all lament it, but I certainly know that he is by others despised for it as he is pretty sure one day to hear. That you have done anything very adventurous in encountering the wrath of the Macaulay party I really do not much apprehend. That he has any better right to monopolize Lord Chatham I more than doubt. That he would have done it better I also doubt; for if truth, which he never is in search of, be better in history than turning sentences and producing an effect by eternal point and glitter, I am assured that the picture I have done, poor as it is, may stand by any he or Empson could have done."

A truly pitiable exhibition of spleen and jealousy which Macaulay notices in the following admirably dignified passage.

"As to Brougham's feelings towards myself, I know and have known for a long time that he hates me. If during the last ten years I have gained any reputation either in politics or in letters, if I have had any successes in life it has been without his help or countenance, and often in spite of his utmost exertions to keep me down. It is strange that he should be surprised at my not calling on him since my return. I did not call on him when I went away. When he was Chancellor and I was in office, I never once attended his levee. It would be strange indeed, if now when he is squandering

the remains of his public character in an attempt to ruin the party of which he was a member then, and of which I am a member still, I should begin to pay court to him. For the sake of the long intimacy which subsisted between him and my father, and of the mutual good offices which subsisted between them, I will not, unless I am compelled, make any public attack on him. But this is really the only tie which restrains me, for I neither love him, nor fear him."

Yet, not long afterwards Brougham suddenly turned round, and for some purpose of his own began to flatter and fawn on Macaulay as persistently as he had previously vilified him! In fact, notwithstanding all his bluster and savagery he was very slenderly equipped with courage as was demonstrated by his conduct in the affair with Canning. Brougham in the course of some speech in the House of Commons had wound up an attack on Canning by accusing him of having exhibited "the most incredible specimen of the most monstrous truckling for the purpose of obtaining office which the whole history of personal tergiversation could furnish." Canning at once sprang to his

feet with the exclamation, "I rise to say that is false." Yet when urged to retract, Brougham ignominiously beat a retreat by declaring that he intended "nothing personal." Canning contemptuously accepted this pitiful evasion, but not long afterwards showed in what esteem he held his "swashbuckler" assailant by remarking in reference to a report that Brougham was seriously ill: "Poor fellow! I should be sorry if anything happened to him, for there would be no one left in the House to do the pounding and mashing!"

Lord Brougham survived till within two years of the Franco-Prussian War, dallying with literature, dabbling in philanthropy, and distilling venom, a solitary, saturnine old man who varied the monotony of an existence at his pseudo-feudal Westmoreland home with occasional excursions to the then almost unexploited village of Cannes, where he at one time cherished wild dreams of punishing his ungrateful country by placing his talents, at all events for three months in

the year, at the disposal of the French Government! Dual citizenship, however, presented insurmountable difficulties, and he was deprived of the prospect, which he is said to have seriously entertained, of figuring as the first President of the French Republic!

But for the premature death of a very different man, Lord Brougham would probably never have occupied the Woolsack, which the Whig leaders had undoubtedly destined for Sir Samuel Romilly. It is not too much to say that Romilly was one of the most beautiful characters both personally and politically that ever mingled in Party life. Nor were his abilities inferior to his character. The son of a French Protestant refugee who carried on business as a jeweller in Marylebone, he entered upon life with scarcely an advantage, except an excellent bringing-up. After a short experience in his father's trade he decided to adopt the law as a profession and entered the office of one of the sworn Clerks in Chancery, where he acquired a considerable insight into legal

principles and practice. After a time, on the encouragement of friends well qualified to judge of his powers, he decided to try his fortune at the Bar to which he was eventually called in 1783, at the same time deciding to make the Court of Chancery his principal sphere of practice. With no interest and handicapped by very indifferent health he made at first very little way, but gradually his abilities and, what was also no inconsiderable advantage, his high character began to obtain recognition, and at the time when the Whigs under Lord Grenville came into office his professional reputation amply justified his appointment as Solicitor-General in the short-lived "All the Talents" Administration. But Romilly was something considerably better than a Whig. In fact he represented the converse of Goldsmith's description of Burke, for he made the claims of Party wholly subordinate to those of Mankind, illuminating by his high-souled philanthropy an assembly only too conspicuously dominated by selfish

interests and ambitions. But Romilly was not merely remarkable in Parliament as a philanthropist, he also represented there an element of political purity and independence which even to the austerest members seemed quixotically fastidious. In those days when a seat in the House of Commons mostly went by favour, for a man in Romilly's situation and circumstances to refuse one, especially when offered by an illustrious patron, was absolutely unprecedented. Yet this is what he had the courage to do when in 1805 the Prince of Wales (then an enthusiastic Whig) proposed to bring him into Parliament, actuated by the favourable impression Romilly had made upon him in connexion with a Chancery matter in which he was Counsel for His Royal Highness.

"I was very much surprised," he writes in his Diary, "to receive such an offer from the Prince. I had not a moment's hesitation as to refusing it, but the difficulty was to find a proper mode of giving that refusal. I could not say that I had determined never to enter

Parliament, for it was my intention to obtain a seat in it. I could not give any reason for wishing to delay it long, for if I ever thought of taking any part in politics, I had not much time to lose. To give my real reason: that I am determined to be independent, and not to enter the House of Commons as the agent of another person, even though that person were the Heir-Apparent of the Crown, would, I suspected, be extremely offensive to the Prince, and be thought by him the highest degree of insolence. But offensive though it was, I had no other resource, and I determined, therefore, with as much respect as I could to assign this reason for my refusal."

Nor was this the only instance of Romilly's lofty disinterestedness; though an ex-Law Officer of the Crown, and by reason of his great legal abilities certain sooner or later to be promoted to the Woolsack, on the inquiry in connexion with the Duke of York's scandal he had the courage to speak and vote against the Duke, being the only eminent lawyer in the House who adopted that course. The impression this conduct created on high-minded men may be gathered from the

following passage in a letter of Sir James Mackintosh.

"I envy Romilly neither his fortune nor his fame, though I am likely to be poor and obscure enough, but I do envy him so noble an opportunity of proving his disinterestedness. If his character had been in the slightest degree that of a demagogue, his conduct might have been ambiguous, but with his habits it can be considered only as a sacrifice of the highest objects of ambition to the mere dictates of conscience. I speak so because, though I trust that he will not lose the Great Seal, yet I am sure he considered himself as sacrificing it, and to view it in any other light would be to rob him of his fame which he deserves."

When it is borne in mind that the Duke of York was the King's favourite son and the Prince of Wales's favourite brother, there can be very little doubt that neither George III nor George IV would have been disposed to accept Romilly as his Chancellor. Moreover, the particular juncture at which he took this honourable course invested it with additional merit inasmuch as at that time the

Tory Ministry was by no means firmly established, and it seemed quite possible that Romilly's Party might very shortly be restored to power. Indeed, as events proved, only a year or two afterwards the Whigs were within an ace of coming in again on the accession of the Prince Regent.

Romilly's sentiments on the subject of the Chancellorship were so refreshingly at variance with those of other eminent barristers belonging to his Party that they are well worth recording.

"I am deeply impressed," he writes in his diary, "that that high station would add nothing to my happiness, or even to my reputation. Already I have attained to the very summit of my wishes. The happiness of my present condition cannot be increased; it may be essentially impaired. I am at the present moment completely independent both of the favours and of the frowns of Government. The large income which I enjoy and which is equal to all my wishes has been entirely produced by my own industry and exertions, for no portion of it am I indebted to the Crown: of no particle of it is it in the power of the Crown to

deprive me. The labours of my profession, great as they are, yet leave me some leisure both for domestic and even for literary enjoyments. In those enjoyments, in the retirement of my study, in the bosom of my family, in the affection of my relatives, in the kindness of my friends, in the good-will of my fellow-citizens, in the uncourted popularity which I know that I enjoy I find all the good that human life can supply, and I am not, whatever others may think of me, so blinded by a preposterous ambition as to wish to change or even to risk

> 'These sacred and homefelt delights,
> This sober certainty of waking bliss'

for the pomp and parade and the splendid restraints of office. . . . The highest office and the greatest dignity that the Crown has to bestow might make me miserable: it is impossible that it could render me happier than I already am."

We have already seen a specimen of the barbarities in the Criminal Law of that day which Romilly attempted to remedy and the obstinate resistance which his efforts encountered. But if they bore little fruit while he lived, to him is due the credit of having single-handed, in Parliament, at all events,

prepared the way for the humane and enlightened régime that has replaced the merciless code of a century ago. If ever there was a man of whom it could be said that the good he did lived after him, it was Sir Samuel Romilly. Like many of England's worthiest sons, he is uncommemorated in either of her national fanes, but his epitaph is written in the statute-books that were the outcome of his deep and fervent humanity. Assuredly, a record so noble is of greater price than the most splendid traditions of statecraft and oratory.

Among the rank and file of the Opposition Francis Horner and Sir James Mackintosh had both achieved considerable reputation though less as orthodox Whig adherents than as "philosophic Liberals," who were by no means disposed to give the Party unqualified allegiance. Romilly, who knew Horner well, considered his death a public calamity, though it is doubtful whether his talents and opinions were such as would have procured for him

high political rank, even had he aspired to it, Nor was Mackintosh, who long survived him, destined, notwithstanding all his ability, to figure prominently in the history of the Party. There was, however, a contemporary of theirs who though at that time a silent and insignificant member of the House, became eventually more than once Whig Prime Minister. This was William Lamb, afterwards second Viscount Melbourne, to whom reference has already been made in connexion with Lord Brougham. Lamb in his earlier Parliamentary days was better known as the long-suffering husband of the eccentric lady who so disastrously attempted to storm the affections of Lord Byron, thereby incurring a couplet which for concentrated savagery surpassed any even of Swift. Though in the eyes of the law the son of Lord Melbourne, Lamb was credited by contemporary scandalmongers with a far less insipid sire in the person of a great noble who was certainly one of his mother's most intimate friends.

At all events, Lamb had nothing in common with Lord Melbourne, an amiable cypher, who as the grandson of an acquisitive provincial attorney was looked upon somewhat shyly even by his brother "mushroom" peers. But Lady Melbourne was one of the Prince of Wales's intimate friends and consequently managed not only to advance the status of her husband, but to promote the fortunes of her three clever sons.

Of these William Lamb was her favourite, and certainly possessed many of her attractive qualities; but his interest in politics was far from absorbing, and, such as it was, before long drifted from Whiggery in the direction of the brilliant little group that yielded allegiance to Canning. As a "Canningite" Lamb gave a silent vote in favour of the Six Acts and other stringent Tory measures, a course of which Brougham did not omit to make capital when Lamb (who had then become Lord Melbourne) succeeded Lord Grey as Whig Premier. But Lamb was in

reality no more a Whig than were Palmerston and other "Canningites" who rather than serve under the Duke of Wellington became nominal adherents of Lord Grey. Nor as Prime Minister was he a much more enthusiastic politician than he had been in his earlier days. Red boxes and the Treasury Bench appealed to him far less than the study of theology in which he was as deeply versed as in the lore of commination. No one, in fact, not even Lord Thurlow, ever made so frequent and effective a use of orthodox expletives, a genial accomplishment which coupled with a supreme contempt for titles and decorations (he refused both an earldom and the Garter) rendered him always more or less popular with the masses in spite of his lukewarmness in all that appertained to Reform. Though indolent and easy-going he had plenty of courage at command, and, if on no other account, he is entitled to immortality as the only man who single-handed braved the fury of Brougham, and defied, with an anathema, the dictation of Lady Holland!

From the Whig notables in the House of Commons let us pass to those in the Upper Chamber, chief among whom was Charles, second Earl Grey. Though always a striking figure in the history of his time, Lord Grey enjoys a reputation scarcely warranted by his achievements. The son of a north-country Baronet whose very moderate military successes were rewarded successively by a barony and an earldom, Grey was one of the small band of Whigs who shared the advanced views and chequered fortunes of Charles Fox. To a commanding presence and dignified manners he added considerable oratorical powers which were considered a sufficient justification for his advancement *per saltum* to high Cabinet rank in Lord Grenville's Administration, for whose fall he was in large measure responsible being the prime cause of the famous misunderstanding with George III, which led to the exit of that singularly abortive Ministry in 1807. To a dispassionate student of all the circumstances connected with that event

it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the King was not only misled, but treated with very scant respect. The Whigs, indeed, were adopting their old attitude of arrogant dictation to the Crown which they appear to have considered one of their hereditary privileges; though Fox, profiting by the sharp experience of early years, had during his few months of office in 1806 very wisely relinquished it. Grey, however, was less amenable, and by a repetition of the same tactics, when with Lord Grenville he was approached by the Regent through Lord Wellesley a few years later, was instrumental in excluding his Party from office till 1830. This ostracism, however composedly accepted by himself, was far from appreciated by his less affluent followers, notably Sheridan who, according to Lord Byron, used to deplore it with post-prandial objurgations and vinous lachrymosity. It was the fashion of Whig writers, for example Macaulay, to extol Lord Grey in almost extravagant terms, but he certainly did very

little for his Party when in Opposition, while as Chief of the Reform Cabinet he presented a somewhat ignominious figure under the arrogant domination of Brougham and Durham. In private life he was apparently irreproachable (though recent publications have rather unexpectedly revealed him as a boudoir confidant of Madame de Lieven), and if he provided somewhat too handsomely for a patriarchal family by means of official patronage, it must be borne in mind that nepotism was never one of the sins included in the Whig decalogue.

Lord Grenville, who from 1806 till his retirement from public life was always associated with Lord Grey in the leadership of the Whig Party, was a very different type of man. A younger son of that George Grenville whose experiments in taxation had been the first step in the disastrous policy which resulted in the loss of the American Colonies, he inherited not a few of his father's defects, though a far abler and more dis-

cerning statesman. His political adventures had been varied; though credited with Liberal tendencies he served for some time in the Tory ranks, from which he was promoted to the Speakership, a position which he soon relinquished for the more congenial functions of a Cabinet Minister, eventually becoming Foreign Secretary, in which capacity he acted during the later years of Pitt's first Administration. Not too tractable as a colleague, he was unpleasantly overbearing as a chief, and Canning when Under-Secretary in this department found him so unpalatable, that he was driven to exchange his post for one far less adapted to his abilities. Lord Grenville's refusal to rejoin Pitt in 1804 was a blow from which, though borne with lofty composure, the Minister never rallied. "I will teach that proud man that I can do without him," was his greeting of Lord Grenville's decision, but he knew full well what so important a defection signified, and it was undoubtedly the first link in that chain of

calamity which was completed by Austerlitz. The death of his great relative and former chief is said to have moved the usually cold and impassive Grenville to tears, but he was never really in sympathy with Pitt, and at once undertook to form an Administration which with only one or two exceptions was composed of thorough-paced Whigs. Of these Fox was the guiding spirit and, remarkably enough, considering his antecedent friction with George III, the only member of the Cabinet personally acceptable to the King. "I never thought I should have lived to regret the death of Mr. Fox," was His Majesty's candid tribute to his former *bête noire*, and there is little doubt that had Fox survived, the Catholic Emancipation question would never have been brought forward, at all events not in the tactless form and manner adopted by his successor. But neither Grenville nor Grey deemed conciliation a necessary equipment for entering the Royal Presence; in their eyes the King

was merely a State-Dispenser of titles and decorations, whom to consult on matters of Government was a time-honoured but tedious farce. George III, however, who had not reigned nearly half a century for nothing, had a knack of tripping up inconvenient Ministers when their foothold seemed firmest. Accordingly, in that predicament the two Dictators and their colleagues very soon found themselves, inspiring the sprightly Mr. Gillray with a cartoon which, if a trifle irreverent, afforded infinite amusement to the public and unfeigned satisfaction to the Tory Party.

The remainder of Lord Grenville's life was spent in cultured ease, varied by fitful re-appearances on the political stage for the purpose of considering proposals and overtures which never found acceptance. In the enjoyment of a princely sinecure, and of a "Sabine Farm" retreat, to provide which he had, as befitted "a friend of the people," annexed the common land, he con-

tented himself with a dignified discharge of such duties as appertained to the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and interchanging civilities with his august relation, the embryo Duke, at Stowe. He lived long enough to witness the return of his long-proscribed Party to power, but was survived by his elder and almost equally able brother, familiarly known as " Tom " Grenville, whose magnificent library represents almost the single benefit derived by the nation from this largely acquisitive family. The name of Grenville has now wholly passed out of politics, and only figures, a phantom of its former self, in the pages of the Peerage ; the ducal strawberry-leaves so feverishly intrigued for by the head of the house have shrivelled into dust, and his palatial seat has been profaned by the hammer of the auctioneer and the emissaries of the sheriff. So ends the brief grandeur of perhaps the most powerful governing family of George III's reign, with its two Premierships, its

three Peerages, its Garters, its Vice-Royalty, its array of Cabinet Offices and places and pensions innumerable. Truly, an object lesson to slaves of selfish and inordinate ambition.

The third Lord Lansdowne, who as Lord Henry Petty had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Grenville Administration, was another Opposition nobleman of distinction and no small ability. But he was less conspicuous as an active politican than as a Party Mæcenas and provider of seats in Parliament for promising young recruits. For quite half a century his family borough of Calne was the nursery for juvenile Whig geniuses, and though nominally it ceased to be his property after the Reform Act, for all practical purposes his influence there remained unimpaired in spite of statutory confiscation. Lord Lansdowne was one of the Whigs who joined Canning's Administration, and he subsequently held ornamental office in various Whig Cabinets, but though he

might more than once have been Prime Minister, he never coveted prominence nor cared for responsibility. In every sense of the word a great nobleman, he preferred a life of intellectual ease, delighting both at Bowood and in Berkley Square to honour guests of every degree, provided only they possessed some distinctive gift or ability. The son of a man who had been Prime Minister before the Coalition Government, and having himself occupied high Cabinet office in 1806, he survived till 1863, a Parliamentary Nestor who could boast earlier political experiences even than Lord Palmerston, and was still more richly stored with eventful memories. In moderation and sagacity he probably excelled all the leading Whigs of his time, and was towards the end of his life resorted to by Queen Victoria as a counsellor in more than one political crisis. His discerning sympathy and delicate generosity were the means of brightening the lives of many of his humbler friends, and one of the pleasantest features

of Tom Moore's entertaining diary is the description of the relations that existed between the great Whig Marquis and his protégé, the small Dublin grocer's gifted son. It was an ideal association. Lord Lansdowne always benignant but never patronizing, and Moore cordially appreciative without ever sacrificing his independence. The value of such a man to a great Party is inestimable, and it is surely a matter for regret that noblemen of Lord Lansdowne's type are nowadays practically extinct. Insensibly their influence tended to soften the asperities of political life, importing into it a mellowness and geniality that were often far more important factors than qualities much less inconspicuous.

Lord Holland, though in a minor degree, showed many of Lord Lansdowne's social characteristics. Intellectually, he was much his inferior and, moreover, affected, if he did not feel, an enthusiasm for democratic principles which in a more considerable

Whig would have seriously prejudiced his Party. But, politics apart, Lord Holland was the most attractive of men. Inheriting largely the family sweetness of temper and amiability of disposition he was acclaimed on all sides by men as a "good fellow" and by women as "a love," nor even, when trying to be rancorous, as he occasionally did in the House of Lords, could any one be found to take him seriously. But for his wife Holland House would have been fully as delectable as Bowood, and unquestionably many of its most famous guests would seldom, if ever, have entered its doors, had it not been for the compensations furnished by the host for the acerbities of the hostess. What those historic banquets were when Lady Holland was sole ruler of the roast the diaries of the day only too circumstantially record, and her almost friendless widowhood was an eloquent testimony to how much her entertainments derived from the fascinations of her lord.

# A Famous Whig Hostess

IF Lord Melbourne deserved commemoration on no other account, he would assuredly have earned it as the one man who had the courage to "stand up" to Elizabeth Vassall, Lady Holland. "Then I'm d——d if I dine here at all!" was his momentous reception of an iterated command from that formidable *châtelaine* to change his seat at one of her historic banquets. Always mindful of his ease, whether at the dinner-table or at the council-board, Lord Melbourne genially demurred. The order was imperiously repeated, whereupon to the consternation, not untinged with envy, of his more tractable fellow-guests, the august proficient in anathema promptly launched the foregoing fulmination, and sauntered composedly out of the room. How Lady Holland took this

act of overt mutiny has not been recorded; but considering the rigid discipline usually observed by the eminent frequenters of her table, the outburst could have been hardly less disconcerting than that of the newly fledged *attaché*, when heckled by his pompously dictatorial chief: "If it comes to that, who the devil are *you*?" The tableau must have been a striking one. The "tragedy queen" indignation of the hostess, the benevolent embarrassment of the host, the furtive twinkling of John Allen's spectacled eyes, and the mock solemnity of mirth-smothering "Sydney," as the deep-mouthed defiance hurtled across the awe-stricken assemblage, arresting for a moment even "Tom" Macaulay's conversational cascade, while he glanced ruefully at the receding form which left him one listener the less—the whole scene furnishes material for one of those pictures with which Mr. Frith a few decades ago used to carry off the palm of popularity at Burlington House.

It is eloquently indicative of Lady Holland's ascendency that Lord Melbourne's insubordination never found an imitator. With that notable exception her arrogant autocracy continued unchallenged during the whole course of her social sway, which, in fact, was little better than a reign of terror, subjecting all sorts and conditions of personages—statesmen, artists, lawyers, and men of letters—to affronts of an order more suggestive of those remorseless "mashers and pounders," Doctors Johnson and Parr, than of a nineteenth-century *grande dame*. What, for instance, could be more flagrantly offensive than the taunt with which she accosted one of the cultured young Whig peers whom it was her whim to patronize: "I hear you're going to publish a poem; can't you suppress it?" Yet the savage snub was swallowed as submissively as if it had been hurled by Catherine of Russia at some rhyme-stringing page of the antechamber.

What was the secret of this extraordinary

influence and domination? A "sugar-cane" heiress, whose coronet was only acquired at the cost of an extremely damaging *cause célèbre*; who retained little more than the shadow of the sumptuous beauty which transferred to the impressionable "young 'un" (as Charles Fox always dubbed his nephew) the marital responsibilities of the much-tried Sir Godfrey Webster; a domineering, fractious, intolerant *poseuse*, whose spasmodic cleverness was defaced by the ludicrous airs and graces of a second-rate Begum; how came it that such a woman could exercise over her brilliant circle a sovereignty unparalleled in the annals of English *salons*? The problem is difficult of solution. Something must, of course, be credited to her wit, a faculty which covered a far greater multitude of sins in those days than it is permitted to do in our less mercurial era; while something, also, must be allowed to the chivalrous forbearance of men who did not fail to realize how rankling, in spite

of her splendid surroundings, was the proscription imposed by her own sex. But probably the keystone of Lady Holland's position was the singular popularity of her lord, who, in addition to the sweetness of temper that was a tradition of his race, was endowed with qualities which seem to have endeared him in a remarkable way even to his political opponents. Without possessing the signal abilities of his grandfather and his uncle, he was untainted by the vulgarity of the one and the "raffishness" of the other. Essentially a *grand seigneur*, even when playing the rôle, which he deemed it necessary to assume, of a democratic nobleman, he was never lacking in an unobtrusive dignity allied to a gentle graciousness of manner which appealed irresistibly to all with whom he came in contact. Brought up at the feet of Charles Fox, he considered it *de rigueur* to masquerade as a worshipper of Napoleon and a denouncer of the Peninsular War; but no one except himself took the

attitude seriously, and having discharged this pious duty, and divested himself of his political motley, he would resume the character for which Nature had designed him, that of a liberal and enlightened Mæcenas, whose never-failing aid and encouragement became household words in the world of art and letters.

But for such a husband, and what, of course, was a contributory factor, such a home, it is doubtful whether Lady Holland would have commanded a status even as dignified as that accorded to the mistress of Gore House, who, if scarcely less tarnished in reputation, could claim the advantages of superior accomplishments and a great deal more amiability. Her career after Lord Holland's death was in sombre contrast to the glittering epoch of Holland House. Estranged from the children she had never loved, and gradually isolated from the illustrious group she had so long held in thrall, she passed the remainder of her life in almost solitary

semi-state between her London dower-house and some dreary seaside hotel, brooding over her faded glory, and imparting the crowning drops of bitterness to the already full cup of faithful and unrepining John Allen, by whose death she was left to such consolations as were derivable from fragmentary Free Thought and the resources of French cookery.

## Queen Victoria's Mentor

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS, by way, no doubt, of bolstering up the reputation he had somehow managed to acquire of being the author of *Junius's Letters*, gave out not long before his death that he intended to leave for posthumous publication what would certainly have proved a poignantly interesting work, namely a species of revised *Debrett*, in which actual instead of ostensible paternity would form the dominant feature. The intimation, as may be readily imagined, was far from palatable reading to the fashionable world of the Regency, and there was a general sense of relief in patrician dove-cotes when on Sir Philip's death it transpired that he had only been indulging in that delicate vein of humour which prompted him to vociferate

on the decease of his first wife whom he had so brutally neglected: "Solder her up, solder her up, she has lived thirty years too long!" Nevertheless, had the threatened compilation seen the light, it ought to have accounted for a great deal which, as pedigrees now stand, is somewhat perplexing in the matter of heredity. We should probably have known which of the three rival claimants was the proud progenitor of Maria Fagniani, while it is tolerably certain that the title of that colourless *parvenu* Peniston, Viscount Melbourne, to go down to posterity as the parent of William Lamb would have been summarily disposed of in favour of a certain great noble with whom undoubtedly the future Prime Minister had much in common for which he could not possibly have been indebted to the slow-witted grandson of the provincial "man of business."

William Lamb, or to give him the name by which he is more generally known, Lord Melbourne, is chiefly renowned for his exploits in

powerful language, which so greatly captivated the British public that his other, and certainly not inferior, accomplishments have been almost entirely overlooked. Not that his acquirements as comminator ought to be underrated. While strictly constant to the national monosyllable, his employment of it was so artistic as to make every oath a masterpiece. No anathemist ever placed his expletives with such consummate effect. There have been others who perhaps commanded a greater volume of unparliamentary diction; Lord Chancellor Thurlow, for instance, in his celebrated reply to the Nonconformist deputation: "Gentlemen, I'm against you, I'm for the Established Church, d—— me! Not that I like the Established Church a bit better than any other Church, except that it *is* established, and whenever you can get your d——d religion established, I'll be for that too!"—an imprecatory outburst which having regard to the particular subject and to the fact that the utterer was keeper of the

King's Conscience and patron of Crown livings, eclipses even the achievements of Commodore Trunnion. But Lord Melbourne disdained to resort to any such trooper-like ebullitions; his "big Ds," though always emphatic, were seldom of the *brutum fulmen* order. Take, for instance, his comment on the rebuff administered by his brother George (then Under-Secretary for the Home Department) to some inconvenient applicant for redress. "My Lord," exclaimed the latter, who had appealed indignantly to headquarters, "I have to complain that Mr. Lamb instead of listening to my statement broke out into the most unseemly language." "Indeed!" was the chuckling rejoinder. "What did he say?" "Why, my Lord, he d——d me and my grievance, and my petition; in fact, he d——d everybody and everything!" "Well, d—— it," replied Melbourne rising from his chair, "what more could he do?"

Almost as conspicuous as his genius for anathema was Lord Melbourne's scorn for

those rewards which even the most disinterested politicians are, as a rule, not above coveting. His refused an earldom and the Garter from William IV, and when the latter honour was again pressed upon him by Queen Victoria during his premiership, he renewed his refusal with the quaintly cynical explanation, that it "would be entirely wasted, as a Prime Minister couldn't very well bribe himself!" The insatiable clamourings of his Whig supporters for ribands and titles always aroused in him the liveliest disgust. "What has the fellow come pestering for now?" he exclaimed to his secretary, who had brought in the card of an already over-requited adherent, "he surely can't want a Garter on his other d——d leg!"

At the first glance Lord Melbourne's qualifications for the state guardianship of a girl-sovereign do not appear convincing. Apart from his incurable proclivity for strong language he laboured under other formidable disadvantages. Though an indulgent hus-

band to a singularly erratic and impracticable wife, his married life had not been without reproach, while as a widower he had been made the subject of a *cause célèbre* from which, though legally extricated, he did not emerge without having revealed a capacity for *galanterie* which even his admirers were constrained to deprecate in a first Minister of the Crown. As a "set-off," it is true, there was his addiction to the study of theology, of which he probably knew more than nine out of ten of those spiritual peers whose translation to a celestial clime constituted one of his acutest ministerial trials ("D—— it! another bishop dead!" was his invariable greeting of an Episcopal vacancy), but to sit down after a hard day's swearing to a volume of the "Fathers" struck the austere middle-classes as savouring less of a religious exercise than of a mental relaxation which so far as moral effects were concerned might just as profitably have been substituted for a perusal of the Racing Calendar.

At all events, the Norton *escalandre* was in the estimation of the public by no means a reassuring incident, and when a year or so afterwards it devolved on Lord Melbourne, as Prime Minister of the day, to take under his charge a sovereign who had scarcely emerged from childhood, the nation regarded the fact with no small degree of misgiving. Yet never was a trust more delicately, more scrupulously, more chivalrously fulfilled. It was the case historically re-enacted, of Una and the Lion, and it is not too much to affirm that next to the Prince Consort there was probably no being in the world who inspired Queen Victoria with such confidence, and, it might even be added, with such affection as the elderly Regency *viveur*. The truth is, Lord Melbourne was *par excellence* a great gentleman, and once realizing this fact the young Queen, with her unerring instinct, unreservedly trusted him. It was the custom of the lesser Tories to accuse him of flattery and subservience, but the charge was wholly

unfounded. Courtly, indeed, he was, but never in the invidious sense of the word a courtier. On the contrary, he presents one of the very few examples of a minister having the courage to tell his sovereign that the Divine Right did not exempt her from the obligation, when in the wrong, of apologizing even to a lady-in-waiting; nor did he shrink from the plainest speaking (accompanied even in the Royal presence by the insuppressible expletive!) when he saw ground for censure in any political conduct, however much he might thereby expose himself to misconstruction: "It was a d——d dishonest act, Ma'am," was his blunt declaration to Her Majesty in regard to Peel's political action on the Corn Law question.

There is no more pathetic figure in nineteenth century politics than Lord Melbourne after his final retirement from office. Suddenly deprived of a tie which had lent to his life a new and singularly purifying influence, he felt the separation from the Queen almost as a

father would feel severance from an only child. Enfeebled in body and not unconscious of the imminence of a more serious affliction, he was doomed to pass his remaining years in comparative inertia, grieving not for the loss of power and station by which he had never set store, but for the extinction of a relationship so precious that for its sake he had more than once allowed himself to cling to office, not a little to the detriment of his reputation for dignity and independence. There have been many greater ministers, but it would be difficult to name one more lovable, while his character and idiosyncracies combined with the peculiar conditions of his private and political life, contrive to make his career one of the most picturesque in the eventful period over which it extended. It is given to few men to have a wife like Lady Caroline Lamb, a protégé like Mrs. Norton, and a pupil like Queen Victoria.

# A Political Ishmael

I WAS once, in my early teens, privileged to behold Henry Peter (why did he always suppress the Peter ?) Lord Brougham and Vaux. At that period of life appearances usually count for more than prestige, and I was not favourably impressed. A saturnine-looking, gaunt-featured old man, in a rumpled suit of rusty black, he might have been a superannuated sexton. When, therefore, an effusive bystander congratulated me on being qualified to boast in future years that I had seen the " great " Lord Brougham, I received his felicitations with very moderate enthusiasm. Nevertheless, had I only realized what a meteoric part this dilapidated Nestor had once played on the political stage, my interest in him, even in those days, would have been

considerably less languid. It was many years before I was able to get him, so to speak, properly into focus, principally owing to the fact that I was content to take the noble lord at his own valuation, as presented by three turgid volumes, in which he figured as the loftiest of advocates and the purest of statesmen, who devoted his leisure moments to ameliorating the lot of humankind. The perusal, however, of somewhat less partial testimony, in the shape of contemporary diaries and correspondence, soon converted this pleasing picture into one of a very different type; in fact, the transformation was as complete as if Mr. Sargent had painted over a portrait by Mr. Sant. The crowning touch of disenchantment was imparted by an utterance of Lord Grey. Now, if there was one Whig in this world who was loyal to his party, collectively and individually, it was the chief of the Reform Cabinet; yet there, confronting me in cold print, was the curt, uncompromising pronouncement that this assimi-

lator of all the virtues was "*one of the greatest scoundrels of his age.*" The bare thought of it almost took my breath away. Brougham, the disciple of Somers, the successor of Hampden, the counterpart of Romilly, reduced by his own familiar friend to the level of Jonathan Wild! Surely for once the generous and judicial-minded Whig leader must have gone strangely astray! Yet, after a rigorous examination of the facts, the justice of the dictum was only too evident.

Lord Grey's stricture was, I think, delivered in 1820. Some fourteen years later he must have deplored the limitations of the English language, for in the meantime he had sat four years in the same Cabinet with Brougham, whose alternate violence and treachery had finally forced him, broken and embittered, into irrevocable retirement. According to Brougham's carefully elaborated calculations, his promotion to the Premiership was now assured, but, to his almost frenzied mortification, he was doomed to see the ball which

appeared to be at his feet roll unaccountably away in a wholly unexpected direction. William IV, though not indisposed to practise buffoonery now and then on his own account, was by no means inclined to tolerate it in his Lord High Chancellor. Brougham, who had stumped the country with the Great Seal like a travelling showman, and who, fortified by mulled port, had wound up one of his Reform Bill orations by sinking in an attitude of prayer at the foot of the Woolsack, so far from being a subject for promotion, had long been inscribed on the Royal "Black List" as a Minister to be got rid of at the first opportunity. This the King soon found it convenient to create. Within a year after the displacement of Lord Grey the Whigs were dismissed by an autocratic *coup de main*, and though his party was very shortly afterwards restored to office, Brougham, scarcely arrived at middle age and in the plenitude of his intellectual powers, was placed under the ban of proscription for the remaining thirty-

four years of his life. In vain did he fawn and cajole and wheedle and intrigue; neither party would enlist him at any price or under any consideration, and, finally throwing up the game in despair, he betook himself to running amok, tomahawk in hand, among his former colleagues, singling out for his particular attentions the amiable and chivalrous Melbourne, for whose benefit, as the successor of Lord Grey, he considerably enriched the catalogue of vituperation.

So much for Lord Brougham as a "statesman." As an advocate he was equally insensible—in one signal instance, at all events—to the dictates of fidelity and honour, for, in spite of having solemnly enunciated the maxim that in the cause of his client an advocate is bound, if need be, to prefer that client's interests even to those of his country, on the first occasion when he thought his aggrandizement was likely to suffer he did not scruple to sacrifice his client—and that client a woman—for the furtherance of his own

insatiable ambition. When the country was ringing with the inflated periods in which he denounced the enormity of bringing Queen Caroline to trial, little did it suspect that but for his own perfidy she would never have been arraigned at all. Yet such was the damning fact. Charged as her confidential adviser to propose highly advantageous terms to the Queen, as an inducement to her to abstain from returning to England, Brougham fearing that the conditions would be accepted, and that he would thus be deprived of the *éclat* attaching to a Royal *cause célèbre*, deliberately suppressed them, an act which not only involved the Queen in ruin, but was within an ace of plunging the country in revolution. For a smaller offence a smaller man would have found himself a professional outcast.

Lord Brougham's record, which might have been a great one, for he possessed great abilities, is little better than a long chronicle of discreditable and derogatory actions. He

was false to his party, he was false to his colleagues, he was false to his client; while his treachery to the friend of his youth, the generous and confiding Durham, undoubtedly accelerated that much-wronged statesman's end. In perfidy, indeed, he wrested the palm from even such a proficient as Lord Loughborough.

# Mr. Pitt in Private Life

FEW statesmen have figured more extensively in biography than Mr. Pitt. Large and small, good and indifferent, the various presentments of the great Premier muster quite a formidable throng, last, though by no means least, being the brilliant monograph of Lord Rosebery. But all are characterized, more or less, by the same deficiency. While the Minister has been exhaustively depicted, we learn comparatively little concerning the man. The one biographer who was eminently qualified to portray this aspect of Mr. Pitt, Bishop Tomline, thought fit to content himself with a jejune compilation of public documents. Considering that he was indebted to his patron for the combined dignities of a mitre and a metropolitan

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT.

(After the portrait by J. Hoppner, R.A.)

deanery, his lordship's gratitude cannot be said to have erred on the side of excess. But to a prelate conspicuous for rapacity, even among the preferment-hunters of the eighteenth century, a dead Prime Minister would scarcely present an inspiring theme. Fortunately, however, other protégés of Mr. Pitt did not share the episcopal apathy, and from them we have been able to glean, though far too scantily, some definite impression of what he was in private life.

No great man more completely belied his demeanour. The popular conception of him, as derived from his public appearance and deportment, was that of an intensely proud, unapproachable personage, calculated, indeed, to command respect, but incapable of enlisting affection. Nothing, in fact, could be more remote from the truth. Very near the surface of that cold and haughty exterior there abounded a sweetness of temper and a tender sensibility which Charles Fox himself could not surpass. Those whom he honoured

with his friendship were few, but they were accorded an attachment which, even when ill requited, the giver seldom found it in his heart wholly to withdraw. In his family he was idolized, not as the Heavenborn Minister, with whose fame all Europe rang, but as the gentle counsellor, the kindly helper, the genial and sympathetic companion. The relatives of whom he saw most were the children of his eldest sister, by her marriage with the Jacobin Lord Stanhope, who, true to his ostentatiously paraded principles, had coolly washed his hands of them. When Lady Stanhope died, the unmarried daughter, Lady Hester (in later years as eccentric as her father, though in quite a harmless fashion), found an asylum with her grandmother, Lady Chatham, on whose death she was at once welcomed by Mr. Pitt, with whom she continued to make her home during the brief remainder of his life. Here are some pleasant glimpses of their doings at Walmer from Lady Hester's sprightly pen :

"WALMER CASTLE, *October* 1803.

"You may easily figure to yourself that I have not much time to spare from the charming society I now live in. To express the kindness with which Mr. Pitt welcomed my return and proposed my living with him would be impossible. One would really suppose that all the obligation had been on his side! Here I am happy to a degree, exactly in the sort of society I most like. There are generally three or four men staying in the house; we dine nine or ten almost every other day. . . . Mr. Pitt absolutely goes through the fatigue of a drill sergeant. It is parade after parade, at fifteen or twenty miles distant from each other. I often attend him, and it is quite as much, I can assure you, as I am equal to, although I am remarkably well just now. . . . Mr. Pitt is determined to remain acting colonel, when his regiment is called into the field. Some persons blame this determination, but I do not; he has always hitherto acted up to his character; why should he, then, in this instance prove deficient? I should not be in the least surprised to hear of the French attempting to land; indeed, I expect it; but I feel equally certain that those who do succeed in this, will neither proceed nor return."

This was, presumably, the volunteer regiment at which Mr. Pitt poked such merciless fun on the occasion of its enrolment. A

deputation, composed of the worthy tradesmen who were mainly to constitute the corps, had waited upon the Lord Warden, to transact the preliminary formalities, and the spokesman, in enumerating the conditions of enlistment, laid great and somewhat solicitous stress on the stipulation that they were not to be expected to serve out of the country. "Certainly not," assented Mr. Pitt, "*except in the case of actual invasion!*"

Another letter, written from Walmer in January 1804, shows that Mr. Pitt's martial ardour had in no wise abated:

"We are in almost daily expectation of the arrival of the French, and Mr. Pitt's regiment is now nearly perfect enough to receive them. . . . Oh, such miserable things as the French gunboats! We took a vessel the other day loaded with gin—to keep up their spirits, I suppose; another, with abominable bread and a vast quantity of peas and beans, which the soldiers eat. One of the boats has an extremely large chest of medicine, probably for half their flotilla. Their guns are ill-mounted, and cannot be used with the same advantage as ours, but are fine pieces of ordnance.

Bonaparte was said to be at Boulogne a few days ago; our officers patrolled all night with the men, which was pleasant! I have my orders how to act in case of real alarm in case of Mr. Pitt's absence, and also a promise from him never to be further from the army than a two hours' ride. This is all I wish. I should break my heart to be drove up the country like a sheep when everything I most love was in danger."

When Mr. Pitt returned to power in 1804 he took a country-house at Putney, whither he contrived occasionally to escape for a breathing-space from the stress of Downing Street and the House of Commons. During one of these flying visits, Sir William Napier, then a stripling, was a guest at Putney, and records a curious scene in which Mr. Pitt figured in the double capacity of romping schoolboy and august Prime Minister. In the course of some "skylarking," which had been started by Napier and the young Stanhopes, Mr. Pitt happened to come in, and, to their delight, rushed into the fray with all the ardour of the youngest present. Just

when the fun was most furious a servant entered and informed the Prime Minister, who was darting coatless across the room embellished with burnt cork, that Lords Hawkesbury and Castlereagh had arrived from London on important business. "Ask them to wait," said Mr. Pitt, and proceeded with the game. When it was finished he told his playfellows that he must now attend to the two noble lords from town, and, retiring, into an adjoining dressing-cupboard, proceeded to adjust his dishevelled attire. On re-entering he rang the bell and ordered the servant to show in the two noblemen. Then occurred a remarkable transformation. Stationing himself in the middle of the room, and drawing himself up to his full height (much, no doubt, as he is represented in Hoppner's masterpiece), he majestically awaited the entry of his colleagues. To the astonishment of Napier, the two lords came into the room almost on their hands and knees, and with abject obsequiousness ex-

plained the object of their visit. Mr. Pitt listened, still maintaining the same attitude of distant *hauteur*, and then, with a sentence or two, dismissed them. Even "the terrible Cornet of Horse" could hardly have been more formidable; it must, however, be remembered that his two visitors were very recent recruits in the Cabinet, where there were already symptoms of insubordination. But, though a strict disciplinarian, no minister was more loyal to those who served under him, as was proved in the case of Lord Melville, himself not always above suspicion in the matter of allegiance. This individual, better known as Dundas, had been an active member of Mr. Pitt's first administration, to which he contributed more ability than character. The Prime Minister firmly believed in his rectitude, but he was generally known to be a jobber of the most flagrant description, if not something worse. When Mr. Pitt resumed office in 1804 Lord Melville was assigned an important post in the Govern-

ment, but, before he had occupied it long, grave charges were brought against him of malversation, while Treasurer of the Navy some years previously. A resolution of censure was moved in the House of Commons, which Mr. Pitt strenuously resisted, and when, after a "neck and neck" division, it was carried by the Speaker's casting vote, he never recovered the severity of the blow. The disgrace of his friend cut him to the heart. Lord Fitzharris, father of the late Lord Malmesbury, thus alludes to the incident in his diary:

"I have ever thought that an aiding cause of Pitt's death, certainly one that tended to shorten his existence, was the result of the proceedings against his old friend and colleague, Lord Melville. I sat wedged close to Pitt himself on the night when we were 216 to 216; and the Speaker Abbot (after looking as white as a sheet and pausing for ten minutes) gave the casting vote against us. Pitt immediately put on the little cocked-hat he was in the habit of wearing when dressed for the evening and jammed it deeply over his forehead, and I distinctly saw *the tears trickling down his cheeks.* We had overheard one or two, such as Colonel Wardle

of notorious memory, say, 'they would see how Billy looked after it.' A few young ardent followers of Pitt, with myself, locked their arms together and formed a circle in which he moved, I believe unconsciously, out of the House; and neither the Colonel nor his friends could approach him."

Lady Hester, too, had something to say upon the affair. In a letter to Mr. Adams, Mr. Pitt's private secretary, she writes:

"I am so hurt about Lord M. and all that has passed. What a charming speech Mr. P. made! . . . Oh, that I had been Lord M. that I might have gone upon my knees to Mr. P. not to have defended me! There was no end yesterday to the farmers and people who wanted to get a sight of the papers. Their joy about Lord M. is whimsical enough; they say it proves that 'bad is the best of them,' and it will make Mr. Pitt 'shine'; that he is the only honest man amongst them and the only public man with clean hands—'our master our Colonel here,' as they call him."

Mr. Adams, Lady Hester's correspondent in the foregoing letter, survived his illustrious chief nearly half a century, only passing away as recently as 1862. Writing in 1861, he says:

"I am, as I believe, the only man still in the land of the living whose happy fortune it was to be admitted to a daily personal intercourse with Mr. Pitt. . . . He was surely a man whom it was quite impossible to know without loving. During his last administration, forsaken by old friends, which he bitterly felt, with declining health, and almost the whole weight of the Government on his shoulders—so delightful was his temper that, with all my shortcomings, no harsh word or look ever escaped him, but all towards me was kindness and indulgence."

Shortly before his death Mr. Adams again writes :

"In thinking of him I am too apt to dwell less upon the loftier qualities of his mind, and upon the great objects to which they were successfully directed, than upon the milder virtues of his delightful disposition, and his unvarying kindness of heart which so much endeared him to all those who knew him well, and inspired them with the warmest feelings of attachment."

Even deeper, if possible, was the veneration in which he was held by that incarnation of officialdom, old George Rose. No one stuck tighter to the Treasury Bench or held quarter-day in profounder reverence than the

veteran Tory placeman; but pensions and appointments weighed as nothing in the scale when measured with his devotion to Mr. Pitt. That of Caleb Balderstone to the Master of Ravenswood was scarcely more touching. Here is the entry made by Rose in his diary on the day of Mr. Pitt's funeral:

"I got through the performance of the last public demonstration of my respect, love, and regard for the memory of one of the purest-minded and best men to whom God, I verily believe, ever gave existence, better than I hoped to do, although so deeply affected during one part of the ceremony as to be in danger of being completely overcome. On my return to my own house I indulged myself with what has been very frequently the occupation of my mind during the last five weeks, and will not unfrequently employ it during the remainder of my life, the reflection on the character and talents of my deceased friend, and the loss I have sustained in his death, banishing entirely every consideration of an interested nature."

Then, after a warm tribute to Mr. Pitt's qualities and conduct as a statesman, he proceeds:

"A certain shyness or reserve with persons he had little or no acquaintance with, and his general carriage (walking remarkably upright), were by many mistaken for pride, of which he had as little as almost any gentleman I ever knew, for in families, or with people with whom he was acquainted, his address and manner were the easiest and most pleasant possible. His temper was, as I before observed, the sweetest, I think, I ever knew, on no occasion ruffled by any dangers, difficulties, or unpleasant occurrences, except in the House of Commons, where undoubtedly sometimes, under considerable provocation, he gave vent to his feelings; and when he did, it was with wonderful effect, for his eloquence was tremendous as well as persuasive. Few could know him as well as myself. From Christmas 1783 to the time of his dissolution I was in constant habits of the warmest affection and friendship as well as of business with him. Hardly three days passed without my seeing him throughout that period, except during the five or six weeks in the summer and the three weeks at Christmas which I used to spend at Cuffnells in the year. He hardly ever had the slightest thought about himself; his mind was wholly occupied with his country. . . . I am as a political man completely left alone. . . . Thus left, I must endeavour to take the best course I can. I trust I shall be guided only by views most strictly honourable, such as will reflect no discredit on those who shall come after me.

I shall be inclined on every important instance to consider what Mr. Pitt would have been likely to wish me to do if he had been alive, but incapable of taking an active share in public business."

Ingratitude to Mr. Pitt was visited by Rose with implacable resentment. Among the friends on whom the Minister had far too good-naturedly lavished favours was the quondam Whig, Eden, afterwards at his own importunate solicitation, created Lord Auckland. A more shameless proficient in the science of self-aggrandisement it would be impossible to conceive. One of the most active instigators of the coalition between Fox and Lord North, he was the first to desert it, in order to advance his interests in the opposite camp, where he thought he perceived a better market for his abilities. Though soliciting employment from the Tories, he was reluctant to effect a public severance from his old associates, and attempted to persuade Lord North that his acceptance from Mr. Pitt's Government of a commercial mission

to Paris was not caused by any change of political attachment, but merely arose from "a temporary affair of trade," which he was appointed to negotiate. "Do not trouble yourself to explain the matter," was Lord North's withering rejoinder, "I have always looked upon the whole transaction *as a mere affair of trade.*" The rank and file of his former party were not less contemptuous. A ceaseless fire of epigrams and lampoons was levelled against the apostate, one particularly poignant ballad having for its burden the following couplet:

Will you give me a place, my dearest Billy Pitt, O?
If I can't have a whole one, O give a little bit, O!

His worst ordeal, however, was in the House of Commons. He had intended to absent himself from the House at the opening of Parliament, but Dundas, having heard that he had addressed a circular letter to his former associates, containing the following passage,

"Though for the reasons assigned I have accepted a

mission from Mr. Pitt, yet I shall always retain my attachment to my old political friends,"

resolved that he should not take up his appointment without publicly signalizing his secession to the Government. He was accordingly forced to attend, and to take his seat on the Treasury Bench between the Prime Minister and Dundas, then Treasurer of the Navy. Wraxall, who was present, thus describes the scene :

" There I beheld him, exposed as in a political pillory during many hours to the gaze, and, indeed, to the pelting of his quondam Opposition companions. All eyes were directed towards him, while those whom he had joined and those whom he had deserted seemed equally to enjoy his distress. His countenance, naturally pale, but rendered more so by his situation, bore eloquent testimony to the feelings which agitated him. Lord Surrey commenced the attack. . . . After inveighing against the Ministerial profusion on various points, and demanding whether the appointment of two ambassadors at Paris was to be regarded as a proof of the economy of administration, he added : ' Possibly, however, the gentleman who is recently appointed to

fill one of those posts will convince me of my error in thinking such a double nomination neither necessary nor economical. I do not see him in his place,' continued Lord Surrey, affecting to look round for Eden among the Opposition members near him, while loud and general laughter pervaded the assembly. 'Perhaps, too,' he proceeded, 'the same gentleman will inform us that he has been furnished with reasons for inducing him to place confidence in those very Ministers, for withholding from whom my good opinion he has furnished me at different times with so many excellent arguments.'"

Eden's services to his new allies were extravagantly overpaid, but he was insatiable, and when at last the fountain of benefactions had ceased to flow, with all the hardihood of the professional mendicant he coolly turned upon his patron and openly attacked him. The following letter will show what Rose, who had up to that time been on intimate terms with Auckland, thought of the noble lord's conduct. A more dignified, and, at the same time, a more disdainful *congé*, has seldom been administered.

"*Saturday Evening, March* 21, 1801.

"The account I have had this day of what fell from your Lordship in the House of Lords last night must interrupt the intercourse I have had with your Lordship during the last fourteen or fifteen years. Ever since I have mixed in public matters I have thought it possible that persons taking different lines in politics (separated very widely, indeed, on subjects of that sort), might mix pleasantly in private society, at least occasionally. But there are circumstances in the present case of so peculiar a nature as to render that impossible with respect to your Lordship and me. It would be as painful for me to enter upon these, as I think it would be to you to have them even more directly alluded to. You will, of course, not take the trouble of calling on me for the papers we talked about this morning."

It should be remembered that it was owing to the secret intrigues of Auckland, the turncoat Whig, and Loughborough, the renegade "Patriot," that the fall of Mr. Pitt's first Administration was principally due. Lord Loughborough's perfidy was not surprising. The maxim of *caveat emptor* was well understood to apply to any transaction

by which his services were secured. Ministers might be driven to make use of him, but they were not likely to forget the brand set upon him by Junius in, perhaps, the most mordant sentence he ever penned : "As for Mr. Wedderburn, there is that about him which even treachery cannot trust." But Loughborough could, at all events, plead that he was under no obligations of private friendship. Not so Auckland ; he had been for many years on the most intimate terms with Mr. Pitt, and was professing the warmest attachment at the very moment that he was engaged in betraying him. Yet, such was the Minister's magnanimity that, although estrangement was inevitable, he never suffered a syllable of reproach to escape him.

Addington was another example of ingratitude only a degree less gross. He, too, owed everything to Mr. Pitt. But for the circumstance that his father, a provincial physician, had been Lord Chatham's family doctor, the very moderate merits of this egregiously

prosperous *parvenu* would, at most, have been requited by a silk gown, or the Benchership of an Inn of Court. But Mr. Pitt, always prompt to recognize even the shadow of an obligation, took Dr. Addington's son by the hand and seated him, when little over thirty, in the Chair of the House of Commons. There, thanks to a not undignified presence and an aptitude for routine, Addington acquitted himself respectably enough for some years. Then came the momentous crisis of 1801, when, faithful to his predilection for mediocrity, George III replaced his redoubtable Minister with a manikin! England greeted the change with consternation, Europe with derision. "Here," exclaimed Napoleon, "is incontestable proof of the King of England's insanity." But, intoxicated with elation, the new Prime Minister tricked himself out in his predecessor's mantle and strutted airily into the breach. Mr. Pitt at first lent him his support, which was acceptable enough; not so his advice,

which Addington's stupendous blunders, especially in finance, rendered supremely necessary. Finding that he was expected to support measures which he was not even allowed to criticize, Mr. Pitt naturally withdrew his aid. The result may be readily imagined. Alternately braggart and crestfallen, Addington floundered from bad to worse, till even George III grew uneasy and turned an appealing gaze towards Walmer. Amid the acclamations of the country Mr. Pitt was reinstated, but Addington never forgave him the supersession. The supremacy of genius is ever an unpardonable crime in the eyes of mediocrity. Notwithstanding the *solatium* of high Cabinet office and a Viscount's coronet, Addington piteously proclaimed himself the victim of cabals and combinations, and, with a yelping pack of place-hunters, did his best to upset the new Administration.

It is a relief to turn from the Edens and the Addingtons to such a friend as Lord Wellesley, whose love and admiration for Mr. Pitt are

thus eloquently recorded in a memorandum contributed to the *Quarterly Review* in 1836.

"In attempting to convey my recollection of Mr. Pitt's character in private society, I cannot separate those qualities which raised him to the highest public eminence from those which rendered him a most amiable companion. Both proceeded from the same origin, and both were happily blended in the noble structure of his temper and disposition. Mr. Pitt's mind was naturally inaccessible to any approach of dark, or low, or ignoble passion. His commanding genius and magnanimous spirit were destined to move in a region far above the reach of those jealousies and suspicions and animosities which disturb the course of ordinary life. . . .

"He was perfectly accomplished in classical literature, both Latin and Greek. . . . Those studies were his constant delight and resort. At Hollwood in Kent, his favourite residence, and at Walmer Castle, his apartments were strewed with Latin and Greek classics, and his conversation with those friends who delighted in similar studies frequently turned on that most attractive branch of literature; but he was so adverse to pedantry and affectation of superior knowledge that he carefully abstained from such topics in the presence of those who could not take pleasure in them. . . .

" No person had a more exquisite sense of the beauties of the country. He took the greatest delight in his residence at Hollwood, which he enlarged and improved, it may be truly said, with his own hands. Often have I seen him working in his woods and gardens with his labourers for whole days together, undergoing considerable bodily fatigue, and with so much eagerness and assiduity that you would suppose the cultivation of his villa to be the principal occupation of his life. He was very fond of exercise on horseback, and when in the country frequently joined the hounds of his neighbourhood, both at Hollwood and Walmer Castle. . . .

" But in all places and at all times his constant delight was society. There he shone with a degree of calm and steady lustre which often astonished me more than his most splendid efforts in Parliament. His manners were perfectly plain without any affectation. Not only was he without presumption, or arrogance, or any air of authority, but he seemed utterly unconscious of his own superiority, and much more disposed to listen than to talk. He never betrayed any symptom of anxiety to usurp the lead, or to display his own power, but rather inclined to draw forth others, and to take merely an equal share in the general conversation; then he plunged heedlessly into the mirth of the hour, with no other care than to promote the general good humour and happiness of the company. His wit was quick and ready, but it was rather lively than sharp

and never envenomed with the least touch of malignity; so that, instead of exciting admiration or terror, it was an additional ingredient to the common enjoyment. He was endowed beyond any man of his time whom I knew with a gay heart and social spirit.

"With these qualities he was the life and soul of his own society. His appearance dispelled all care; his brow was never clouded, even in the severest public trials; and joy and hope and confidence beamed from his countenance in every crisis of difficulty and danger. He was a most affectionate, indulgent, and benevolent friend, and so easy of access that all his acquaintances in any embarrassment would rather resort to him for advice than to any person who might be supposed to have more leisure. His heart was always at leisure to receive the communications of his friends, and always open to give the best advice in the most gentle and pleasant manner. . . .

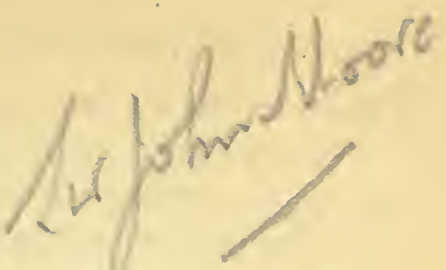
"If any additional evidence were required of the excellence of his social character it would be found abundantly in the deep sorrow of a most numerous class of independent, honest, and sincerely attached friends, who wept over the loss of his benevolent and affectionate temper and disposition with a degree of heartfelt grief which no political sentiment could produce."

Such was Mr. Pitt in the estimation of those

who knew and loved him best. Seldom, assuredly, among a nation's illustrious sons has so mighty a spirit been allied to so gentle and guileless a heart.

GENERAL SIR JOHN MOORE.

(After the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.)



# A Nineteenth-Century Bayard

THERE are, we imagine, very few, even among those with whom verse is a negligible quantity, who have not been moved by Wolfe's famous stanzas on the burial of Sir John Moore. But, beyond the fact that he died gloriously in the moment of victory, the nation at large knows singularly little of this truly illustrious soldier, and of the dark ordeal through which he passed to the atoning glory of Corunna.

Although prior to his campaign in the Peninsula Sir John Moore had achieved considerable distinction as a commander, it was there that his great qualities first had an opportunity of fully displaying themselves. In the face of stupendous difficulties, aggravated by the blunders and bad faith of those from

whom he had the best right to expect assistance and support, he succeeded not only in averting overwhelming disaster, but in shedding over retreat the halo of victory.

In order properly to estimate Sir John Moore's services in the Peninsula, it is necessary to advert briefly to the Ministry at whose instance he took the field. In 1807 Lord Grenville's Government was replaced by a Tory Administration under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Portland. Not even the Addington Cabinet of 1801 was so profusely equipped with mediocrities. There was, indeed, one notable exception in the person of Mr. Canning, the Foreign Secretary; but even his splendid abilities could avail little against the collective incapacity of his colleagues, by whom he was foiled and stultified at every turn. The success of most of his projects depended upon the efficiency with which they were executed by the War Department, and, as he was wont bitterly to complain, nearly every scheme devised by him was only too

certain to miscarry when once it passed into the hands of Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary for War. To quote the expression of one of Mr. Canning's most gifted biographers, "all the gold that he put into his colleague's crucible came out, somehow or other, brass." Lord Castlereagh had won his political spurs by degrading Ireland into an auction-mart in order to force through the Union. So serviceable a henchman was not likely to go unrewarded. Cabinet rank was soon conferred upon him, and in the Portland Administration he was assigned the supremely important post of Secretary for War. A more disastrous appointment never discredited the reign of George III. Boldness he certainly possessed, and a species of worldly shrewdness that would have enabled him to figure reputably as Minister to a minor Power; but in the higher qualities of statesmanship he was wholly deficient. Moreover, a less than rudimentary acquaintance with grammar, allied to a ludicrously chaotic style, rendered his speeches, and not

infrequently his dispatches, barely intelligible. Yet to such hands as these was committed the conduct of a war that would have taxed to the utmost the administrative genius of a Chatham. Blunder and miscarriage rapidly became the order of the day. In vain did Mr. Canning protest to the Duke of Portland, that unless Lord Castlereagh relinquished the War Office his Grace would have to find a new Foreign Secretary. The Duke, a comatose valetudinarian, who dreaded nothing so much as a Cabinet convulsion, pleaded for a temporizing policy, in which Mr. Canning reluctantly acquiesced. At length the monstrous fiasco of Walcheren, an abortive campaign, which cost the country the best part of an army and twenty millions of money,[1] compelled even the procrastinating Premier to speak out. Lord Castlereagh indignantly resigned, and

[1] Not a blow was struck, but out of 40,000 men 35,000 were invalided by fever, which the sapient War Secretary actually endeavoured to treat with ship loads of Thames water.

after salving his injured *amour propre* by doing his best to put a bullet through Mr. Canning, was duly re-admitted into official life to mismanage another department.

Foremost among the victims of the War Minister's ignorance and inefficiency was Sir John Moore. In the spring of 1808 he was dispatched in command of an expedition in aid of Sweden, but with such vague instructions that there was little chance of his being able to accomplish any real service. On the 17th of May he arrived with his army, consisting of 10,000 men, at Gothenburg, when, to his astonishment and disgust, he was informed by the Swedish Government that the troops could not be allowed to disembark. They were, consequently, compelled to remain on the crowded transports for several weeks. The General, however, repaired to Stockholm to confer with the Government on a plan of action. There, to his dismay, he found that the half-crazy King, whose forces were utterly inadequate for the protection of the country,

was bent on taking the offensive, and on the British army joining him in an attack on Zealand. Sir John Moore, who was far too experienced a soldier not to see the impracticability of such a project, respectfully urged its insurmountable difficulties. The King thereupon proposed as an alternative that the British should take isolated action, and invade Finland. This scheme was manifestly even more fatuous than the preceding one, and Sir John Moore endeavoured to convince his Majesty that 10,000 British, however capable, were absolutely no match for the main force of the Russian Empire, which would infallibly be opposed to them. But the King, instead of recognizing the wisdom of Sir John's objections, was so incensed at his opposition that he actually had him arrested. The General, however, contrived to extricate himself from this *impasse*, and to withdraw his army from Sweden, without implicating his Government. Writing to Lady Hester Stanhope a few months afterwards, he thus refers

to the incident : " Had Mr. Pitt been Minister I should have remained, knowing that he would have sent a squadron to Stockholm to assist me, and to demand satisfaction for the insult offered in my person to the country, but I had no such confidence in the new Administration."

The Government which he had thus saved from a very serious dilemma had no alternative but to approve his conduct ; nevertheless, on his return they signalized their gratitude by appointing him only third in command of the expedition then being organized for the Peninsula. Moreover, the supersession—for considering Sir John Moore's standing and services, such it virtually amounted to—was effected in so offensive a manner as to suggest that the Government was anxious to deprive him of employment altogether. But Sir John Moore was not the man to be hectored into retirement by an insolent official. He demanded an interview with Lord Castlereagh, in which he not only protested against the

indignity to which he had been subjected, but warned the Minister that little could be expected from the absurdly inadequate force that was being sent to Spain. He then proceeded to Portsmouth to take up his command. He was followed by a letter from Lord Castlereagh censuring him for his remonstrance, which, the writer stated, would be reported to the King, while measures would be taken to remove him from his command. The General's reply, a model of dignified disdain, must have considerably surprised the arrogant Minister.

" I am," he wrote, " this moment honoured with your Lordship's letter of yesterday's date. As I have already had the honour to express my sentiments to your Lordship fully at my last interview, it is, I think, unnecessary to trouble you with a repetition of them now. I am about to proceed on the service on which I have been ordered, and it shall be my endeavour to acquit myself with the same zeal by which I have ever been actuated in the service of my country. The communication which it has been thought proper to make to his Majesty cannot fail to give me pleasure ; I have the most perfect

reliance on his Majesty's justice, and shall never feel greater security than when my conduct, my character, and my honour are under his Majesty's protection."

Fortunately, this letter, every word of which breathes the true spirit of a soldier, came under the eye of the King, who showed that his justice had not been relied upon in vain, for, so far from being removed from his command, on arriving in Portugal Sir John Moore was ordered to relieve Sir Harry Burrard and to place himself at the head of the expedition.

He reached Portugal early in October, 1808. Hardly had he disembarked when he was furnished with a startling proof of the War Minister's incompetence. Lord Castlereagh had given him to understand that every preparation for the equipment of the army had been made previous to its leaving England. The Commander-in-Chief was not long in discovering the character of these official assurances. "At this instant," he writes to the Secretary for War, on the 9th of October, "the army is without equipment of any kind,

either for the carriage of the light baggage of regiments, artillery stores, commissariat stores, or other appendages of any army, and not a magazine is formed on any of the routes by which we are to march." But this was not all; a few days later he writes to Lord William Bentinck, one of the British Commissioners: "Sir David Baird has unfortunately been sent out without money; he has applied to me, and I have none to give him. I undertake my march in the hope that some will arrive; if it does not, it will add to the number of a great many distresses."

Placing blind reliance on the favourable representations of the Spanish Government respecting the strength of their armies and the patriotism of the people, the British Cabinet had sent out Sir John Moore in command of less than 25,000 men, with instructions to advance into Spain and assist the national troops in striking a decisive blow against the invaders. But the General, who, it will be remembered, had his misgivings even before

sailing, only too quickly realized that he had been dispatched on a fool's errand. On reaching Salamanca, whither he had proceeded, amid countless obstacles and difficulties, in order to concentrate his forces with a view to an advance, he discovered that not only were the Spanish armies very far from what the official accounts had represented them, but that the country itself had very little heart in the cause. In a letter to Lord William Bentinck, dated the 15th of November after commenting indignantly on the manner in which the English Government had been misled respecting the position of affairs in Spain, he continues :

" The English army will, I hope, do all that can be expected from their numbers, but the safety of Spain depends upon the union of their inhabitants, their enthusiasm in their cause, and their firm and devoted determination to die rather than submit to the French ; nothing short of this will enable them to resist the formidable attack about to be made upon them. If they will adhere, our aid can be of the greatest use to them, but if not we shall soon be outnumbered, were

our forces quadrupled. I am, therefore, much more anxious to see exertion and energy in the Governments, and enthusiasm in their armies, than to have my force augmented. The moment is a critical one; my own situation is particularly so—I have never seen it otherwise—but I pushed into Spain at all hazards. This was the order of my Government, and it was the will of the people of England."

Sir John Moore had advanced to Salamanca on the supposition that he could rely on the co-operation of 60,000 or 70,000 Spanish troops, Valladolid having been indicated for the base of his operations and the formation of his magazines. Yet, almost immediately on his arrival at Salamanca, intelligence reached him that Valladolid, which was not more than three marches distant, was actually in the occupation of the enemy! His position was now one of extreme peril. The two auxiliary divisions under Sir David Baird and Sir John Hope had not yet come up; and he could not count on so much as a single Spanish battalion. The news of the investment

of Valladolid was quickly followed by that of other disasters, culminating in the defeat of Castanos. This last reverse gave the *coup de grace* to the Spanish arms. The strength of the country was utterly broken, all resistance was at an end, and Napoleon, at the head of an immense force, was pressing on to Madrid. Under such circumstances, for the small British army to attempt the advance originally contemplated would have been nothing short of insanity. Sir John Moore accordingly resolved to fall back upon Portugal. He decided, however, to remain at Salamanca till he could be joined by General Hope, while he intended General Baird to regain the coast and proceed thence to Lisbon.

Such a course, however mortifying, was absolutely imperative. Through no fault of his own the Commander-in-Chief had been placed in a false position, from which he was bound to extricate his army by the best means in his power.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Frere, the

British Ambassador in Spain, commenced his official relations with Sir John Moore. John Hookham Frere was a clever and vivacious *littérateur* who had collaborated with Mr. Canning in "The Anti-Jacobin," a circumstance to which he owed his introduction into public life. Had he been allowed to climb the political ladder rather more gradually, he might possibly have proved a useful functionary, though scarcely in a first-rate capacity. But the rapidity with which he had been pushed upward had turned his head, and impressed him with the conviction that he was little inferior in state-craft to his patron, the Foreign Secretary. Consequential and opiniated, he mistook arrogance for dignity and obstinacy for decision; moreover, he wholly failed to appreciate one of the paramount duties of a diplomatic representative, especially when circumstanced like himself, namely, that of obtaining early and accurate information. With a credulity which, considering the momentous issues involved, was little short

of criminal, he implicitly accepted every fabrication that it suited the Spanish Government to foist upon him. A more fitting abettor for the head of the War Department it would have been difficult to discover. How deplorably the latter had failed in his duty we have already seen, but even his incapacity paled before that of the British Ambassador. No sooner did Mr. Frere hear of Sir John Moore's decision to retreat than with characteristic presumption he determined to oppose it. With the best opportunities of ascertaining the true position of affairs, he took upon himself to represent that the Spanish reverses were of trivial moment, and, further, that the French forces on the side of Burgos and Valladolid did not exceed 11,000 men, when, as he might easily have ascertained, they actually numbered over 100,000! Sir John Moore, however, declined to reconsider his decision, in the expediency of which General Hope, on his arrival, heartily concurred. But before the preparations for retreat could be

completed, Mr. Frere made a fresh attempt to frustrate it. On the 30th November he addressed another dispatch to Sir John Moore, strongly urging an advance on Madrid, and representing in glowing terms the determined attitude of the Spaniards and the abundant resources at their command. This dispatch was followed by a letter to a similar effect from the Government of the capital, on behalf of the Supreme Junta. Scarcely had they been delivered when a further dispatch, written at Talavera, on the 3rd of December, was received from Mr. Frere, repeating his former representations in still stronger terms, though at the very moment that he was thus again urging an advance on Madrid, and depicting the heroic attitude of its inhabitants, the city was on the eve of capitulation, which, in fact, took place without a blow, on the morning of the 4th. In the face of the Ambassador's strenuously iterated representations, so strongly supported by the Spanish Government, Sir John Moore felt that he

had no alternative but to suspend his retreat, especially as he had now been reinforced by General Hope, and made secure his junction with Sir David Baird. He accordingly decided to advance against Soult, who was posted on the Carrion. By thus threatening the enemy's communications, he hoped to divert the Emperor from the south, and thereby afford an opportunity for the Spanish forces to rally and reunite. Before his army could be put in motion, intelligence reached him of the capitulation of Madrid, but this did not induce him to abandon his project. He had satisfied himself that, situated as he was, there existed no other means of rendering service to the Spanish cause, and of saving his army from imputations to which the English nation, ignorant of the true state of affairs, was already not indisposed to give expression. That the enterprise was one of no ordinary danger Sir John Moore did not fail to realize. "He knew," to quote the striking language of Sir William Napier, "that his army must

glide along the edge of a precipice, cross a gulf on a rotten plank ; but he also knew the martial qualities of his soldiers, felt the pulsation of his own genius, and, the object being worth the deed, he dared essay it even against Napoleon." Briefly, his plan was this : To engage Soult, if possible, before the Emperor could intercept him ; but if foiled in this attempt, to retreat rapidly to some point on the coast (Corunna was eventually fixed upon), and rejoin his transports. Even should his advance against Soult be arrested, it would have the effect of drawing the Emperor off the south, and that was the prime object of his operation.

Here it is material to mention an incident which forcibly illustrates the attitude which the British Ambassador thought fit to assume towards Sir John Moore.

The bearer of the dispatch of the 3rd December was one Charmilly, a disreputable French adventurer, who had fallen in with Mr. Frere on the road to Talavera, and so impressed

him with his account of the enthusiasm and patriotic spirit prevalent at Madrid, that the Ambassador not only entrusted him with his dispatches, but invested him with special authority to use his utmost endeavours to prevent the retreat. The General, however, who had some knowledge of the man's antecedents, received his statements with a coldness which augured ill for success. But Charmilly was not to be repulsed. On the following day he sought another interview with Sir John Moore, and produced a second letter from Mr. Frere, which he had been charged to deliver should the first prove ineffectual. Its purport was to desire that in case the General persisted in retreating, " the bearer might previously be examined before a council of war." In other words, the Commander-in-Chief was to submit himself for judgment, and possibly for censure, by his inferior officers. With just indignation Sir John Moore at once ordered Charmilly out of the British cantonments. But even such an insult as this he did not allow to interfere

with his public duty. He accordingly wrote to Mr. Frere in the following terms :—

"I wish anxiously to continue upon the most confidential footing with you as the King's Minister, and I hope, as we have but one interest, the public welfare, though we occasionally see it in different aspects, that this will not disturb the harmony that subsists between us. Fully impressed as I am with these sentiments I shall abstain from any remarks upon the two letters from you delivered to me last night and this morning by Colonel Charmilly, or on the message which accompanied them. I certainly at first did feel and expressed much indignation at such a person being made the channel of a communication of that sort from you to me. Those feelings are at an end, and I dare say they will never be created towards you again."

Mr. Frere, however, took no notice of this magnanimous letter, but followed up his affront with one even more offensive. In another dispatch, written a few days afterwards, when Madrid was already in possession of the French, and Spanish resistance utterly extinguished, after again dilating on the favourable situation and strenuously oppos-

ing the retreat, he concludes by pointing out "the immense responsibility with which he (Sir John Moore) charged himself by adopting, upon a supposed military necessity, a measure which must be followed by immediate if not final ruin to an ally, and by indelible disgrace to the country with whose resources he was entrusted."

"I am unwilling," he continued, "to enlarge upon a subject in which my feelings must be stifled or expressed at the risk of offence which, with such an interest at stake, I should feel unwilling to excite, but this much I must say, that if the British army had been sent abroad for the express purpose of doing the utmost possible mischief to the Spanish cause, with the single exception of not firing a shot against their troops, they would, according to the measures now announced as about to be pursued, have completely fulfilled their purpose."

This second insult Sir John Moore met in the same dignified spirit which had marked his treatment of the preceding one.

"As to your letter," he wrote, "delivered to me at Toro by Mr. Stuart, I shall not remark upon it; it is in the style of the two that were brought by Colonel

Charmilly, and, consequently, was answered by my letter of the 6th, of which I send you a duplicate. That subject is, I hope, at rest."

After this we fortunately hear little more of Mr. Frere. Events rapidly proved too strong even for his prodigious effrontery, and a few months later he was relieved of his diplomatic duties. Mr. Canning made every effort to whitewash his protégé, with a loyalty that would have been more praiseworthy had it also been extended to Sir John Moore. But Mr. Frere was irretrievably discredited. The figure he had cut in the Peninsula was too pitiful even for an epoch singularly tolerant of incapacity, and it is satisfactory to record that this unconscionable blunderer, whose treatment of Sir John Moore has left an ineffaceable stigma on his memory, was relegated for the remainder of his life to the literary trifling from which he ought never to have been withdrawn.

The British advance from Salamanca must

now be described. On December 19, Sir John Moore, at the head of about 23,500 troops, with sixty guns, commenced his march against Soult. News of the movement reached Napoleon on the 21st; on the 22nd he had left Madrid with 50,000 men and was at the foot of the Guadrama. The passes were deep in snow, and the officer commanding the advanced guard reported the mountain road impracticable, but the Emperor placed himself at the head of the column, and on foot, in the midst of driving storms of hail and snow, led his troops over the mountain. Day and night he continued the march, hoping to come upon the British at Valderos, but in spite of his stupendous exertions he was twelve hours too late. Sir John Moore had advanced as far as Sahagun when he heard of the Emperor's departure from Madrid. Under these circumstances, to proceed would have been to court certain annihilation; moreover, his principal object, the diversion of Napoleon from the south, had been secured. He

accordingly at once gave orders to retreat. On discovering this Soult instantly started in pursuit, so that in the wake of the small British army were hastening two French forces, numbering together not less than 80,000 men.

The retreating army soon found itself beset by every kind of hardship and distress. Pushing forward rapidly over execrable roads and in the worst of weather, the troops were very often destitute of fuel and shelter, while provisions were only obtainable with extreme difficulty. The baggage and ammunition wagons were frequently deserted in the night by the Spanish drivers, panic-stricken at the approach of the enemy, and as without them the draught mules and bullocks could not be made to stir, stores and provisions had often to be destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the French. To make matters worse, the Spanish peasantry offered no assistance and showed no sympathy ; indeed, they actually fled at the approach of the ally

who was braving so much on their behalf. The discipline of the troops, at first excellent, soon became relaxed. Their indignation at the conduct of the Spaniards, added to their disappointment at not having had an opportunity of coming to close quarters with the enemy, from whom, in their ignorance, they considered it humiliating, if not disgraceful, to retreat, created a demoralizing effect, which Sir John Moore found it almost impossible to check.

The following general order, which he issued on the subject, will show how largely the evil had spread :—

"The advance guard of the French is already close to us, and it is presumed that the main body is not far distant; an action may therefore be hourly expected. If the generals and commanding officers of regiments wish to give the army a fair chance of success, they will exert themselves to restore order and discipline in the regiments, brigades, and divisions which they command. The Commander of the Forces is tired of giving orders which are never attended to; he therefore appeals to the honour and feelings of the army he commands,

and if those are not sufficient to induce them to do their duty, he must despair of succeeding by any other means. He was forced to order a soldier to be shot at Villa Franca, and he will order all others to be executed who are guilty of similar enormities; but he considers there would be no occasion to proceed to such extremities if the officers did their duty, as it is chiefly from their negligence and from the want of proper regulations in the regiments that crimes and irregularities are committed in quarters and upon march."

To a commander who ruled not by fear, but by justice and humanity, the necessity of issuing such an order must have been supremely painful. Reluctance to resort to extremities is, indeed, apparent in every line, while the pathetic appeal to honour and good-feeling is evidently far more congenial than condemnation and menace; but excess and ill-discipline had reached such a pass that severe measures had become indispensable.

Great, however, as were the difficulties with which he had to contend, Sir John Moore lost no opportunity of harassing the enemy, and after several successful skirmishes on the

march he halted at Lugo, on January 6, and there offered battle on two successive days; but Soult, who had now sole charge of the pursuit (Napoleon having withdrawn on the 1st, to assume the command in Austria), declined a general engagement, contenting himself with an attack on the British outposts, which was successfully repulsed, with considerable loss to the enemy. The latter, however, were far too strongly posted to justify an assault from an inferior force; accordingly Sir John Moore quitted Lugo on the night of the 7th, and resumed his retreat. Deceived by fires which the British had left burning on their camping ground, the enemy did not discover their departure till long after daylight, so that Sir John Moore got a considerable start of his pursuers. On January 11, he reached Corunna, where he had hoped to embark his army, but to his consternation the transports had not arrived. An action seemed now inevitable, yet seldom have troops been less fitted to confront a

formidable enemy than this ill-starred army. Not only were the men themselves in a pitiable plight, but it had been found necessary to sacrifice most of the baggage and a portion of the artillery, as well as a great number of the horses, which had become unserviceable on the march. Nevertheless, true to its ancient spirit and traditions, the British army exulted in the prospect of at last closing with the enemy. On the 14th the French arrived; but they remained inactive until about noon on the 16th, when, as Sir John Moore was giving directions for embarkation on the transports, which had now made their appearance, intelligence reached him that the French line was getting under arms. He struck spurs to his horse and galloped to the field. The advance picquets were already being driven back in disorder, and shortly afterwards the enemy's first column succeeded in carrying the village of Elvina, beyond which it was met by the 50th and 42nd regiments, who forced it back; the 50th, most gallantly

led by Major Napier (afterwards the famous Sir Charles Napier) and Major Banks Stanhope, followed the retiring troops into the village, and drove them through with heavy loss. There, however, the enemy was reinforced and renewed the attack, in the course of which Major Napier was severely wounded and taken prisoner, and Major Stanhope shot through the heart. Death was so instantaneous that even after he had expired his features still wore the smile of elation evoked by the bravery of his men and the praise of his General, who had specially commended the conduct of the regiment and its two commanding officers.

A few minutes later Sir John Moore, while still anxiously watching the fighting round Elvina, was struck by a cannon-shot, which inflicted terrible injuries, necessitating his removal from the field. The incident is thus described by Captain Hardinge, afterwards Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army :—

"I had been ordered by Sir John Moore to desire a battalion of the Guards to advance, which battalion was at one time intended to have dislodged a corps of the enemy from a large house and garden on the opposite side of the valley, and I was pointing out to the General the situation of the battalion, and our horses were touching, when a cannon-shot from the enemy's battery carried away his left shoulder and part of the collar-bone, leaving the arm hanging by the flesh. The violence of the stroke threw him off his horse on his back. Not a muscle of his face altered, nor did a sigh betray the least sensation of pain. I dismounted, and taking his hand, he pressed mine forcibly, casting his eyes very anxiously toward the 42nd regiment, which was hotly engaged, and his countenance expressed satisfaction when I informed him that the regiment was advancing. Assisted by a soldier of the 42nd, he was removed a few yards behind the shelter of a wall. Colonel Graham Balgowan and Captain Woodford about this time came up, and perceiving the state of Sir John's wound, instantly rode off for a surgeon. The blood flowed fast, but the attempt to stop it with my sash was useless from the size of the wound. Sir John assented to being moved in a blanket to the rear. In raising him for the purpose, his sword, hanging on the wounded side, touched his arm and became entangled between his legs. I perceived the inconvenience, and was in the act of unbuckling it from the waist, when

he said, in his usual tone and manner, and in a very distinct voice, 'It is as well as it is; I had rather it should go out of the field with me.'"

As the soldiers were carrying him to his quarters he made them frequently turn him round in order that he might see the battle-field and hear the firing, which he soon noticed with satisfaction began to grow fainter. On his arrival at his quarters he was in great agony and could speak but little; he contrived, however, to say to Colonel Anderson, who for over twenty years had been his friend and companion in arms, "Anderson, you know that I always wished to die in this way." He also frequently inquired, "Are the French beaten?" and when at length he was told that they were beaten at every point, he said, "It is a great satisfaction to me to know that we have beaten the French. I hope the people of England will be satisfied; I hope my country will do me justice." These were almost his last words; a few minutes afterwards he expired.

Thus perished, in the prime of his life, this most gifted and gallant soldier whose heroic spirit and knightly bearing imported into a prosaic age the highest traditions of chivalry.

The enemy, stirred by a noble enthusiasm for the martial qualities on which the Government of his own country had set so little store, honoured his memory with a monument on the field of their defeat. To this splendid tribute was added another of signal distinction, namely the applause of no less a strategist than Napoleon, who affirmed that the talents and resolution of Sir John Moore had alone saved the British army from destruction. When it is considered that he not only accomplished this, but by detaching the Emperor from the southern provinces rendered inestimable service to the Spanish cause; further, that his retreat, though conducted under peculiarly arduous conditions, never encountered a single reverse, but culminated in a brilliant victory over superior troops, most ably commanded, he must indubitably

be credited with an achievement worthy to be ranked among the foremost in British warfare.

Whether, had he lived, he would have won his meet reward, is, unhappily, open to doubt, for even a victor's grave afforded him no sanctuary from the ignorant and the unjust.[1] But their calumnies have long since been silenced by the indignant eloquence of one whose judgment of his character and genius admits of no appeal:

"He maintained the right," declared the high-souled Napier, "with a vehemence bordering upon fierceness, and every important transaction in which he was engaged increased his reputation for talent and confirmed his character as a stern enemy to vice, a steadfast friend to merit, a just and faithful servant of his country. The honest loved him, the dishonest feared him. For while he lived he did not shun, but scorned and spurned, the base, and with characteristic propriety they spurned at him when he was dead. A soldier from his earliest

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[1] In fairness to Lord Castlereagh it should be mentioned that he was not of the number.

youth, he thirsted for the honours of his profession. . . . Confident in the strength of his genius, he disregarded the clamours of presumptuous ignorance. Opposing sound military views to the foolish projects so insolently thrust upon him, he conducted his long and arduous retreat with sagacity, intelligence, and fortitude; no insult disturbed, no falsehood deceived, him, no remonstrances shook his determination; fortune frowned without subduing his constancy; death struck, but the spirit of the man remained unbroken when his shattered body scarcely afforded it a habitation. Having done all that was just towards others he remembered what was due to himself. Neither the shock of the mortal blow, nor the lingering hours of acute pain which preceded his dissolution, could quell the pride of his gallant heart, or lower the dignified feeling with which, conscious of merit, he at the last moment asserted his right to the gratitude of the country he had served so truly. If glory be a distinction, for such a man Death is not a leveller!"

Rarely has a hero been more happy in his historian. A nobler panegyric it would be hard to find, even in the pages of Tacitus.

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